FATHERLESS FANNY

discovered to be

THE DUCHESS OF ALBEMARLE.

London Published by Thos Kelly 17 *Paternoster Row. Sept.r 1.1820.*

FATHERLESS FANNY;

OR

Memoirs

OF A

Little Mendicant,

AND

HER BENEFACTORS.

LONDON,

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FATHERLESS FANNY;

OR,

A YOUNG LADY'S

FIRST ENTRANCE INTO LIFE:

BEING

The Memoirs

OF

A LITTLE MENDICANT

AND

HER BENEFACTORS.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "THE OLD ENGLISH BARON," &c. &c.

Meek Child of WANT! I pity thy distress,
For I have learn'd to feel another's woe;
Yes, my heart pants to make thy sorrow less,
And dry the tear which mis'ry bids to flow.

ANDERSON.

LONDON:

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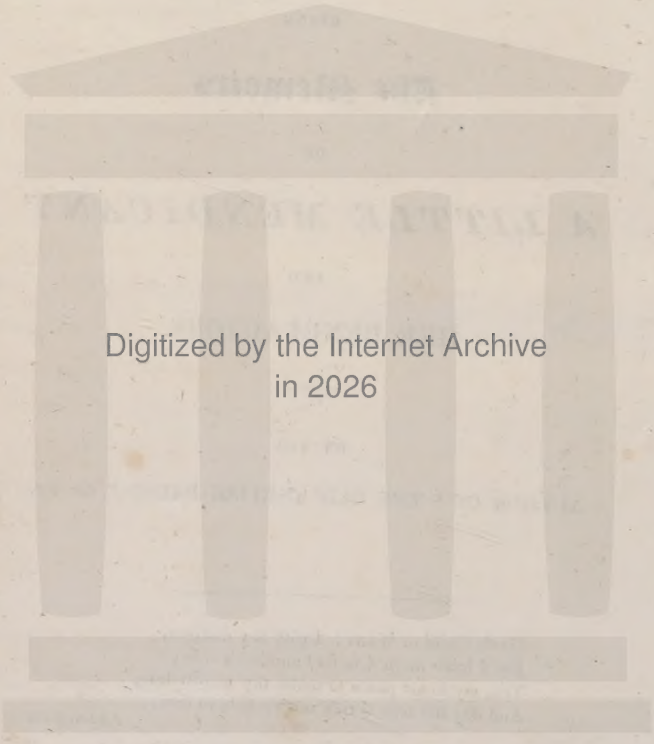

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PREFACE.

THIS Novel is one of the newest and most modern now extant, and is out of the common track of Novel writing: it is an attempt to unite the various merits and graces of the ancient romance and modern novel; and, like history, represent human nature as real life. To attain this end, there is required a degree of the marvellous to excite the attention, and real manners of life to give an air of probability to the work, and to engage the heart in its behalf. The characters are admirably drawn and supported: the diction polished and elegant; and the whole so closely connected, as to keep the imagination of the reader continually alive to the subject before him.

Thus mankind are naturally pleased with what gratifies their vanity; and vanity, like all other passions of the human heart, may be rendered subservient to good and useful purposes.

The reader is not, therefore, confused, with the association of truth with fiction, although fiction is the basis of the story. The passion

that awakens and gives energy to life, is alone painted in those colours which AURORA *gives to the morning, when all animated nature wakes to feast on the luxuriant fruits of Summer, when all is ecstacy, harmony, and joy.*

" Venal orators, who are dissatisfied with their own situation, ever discover either vice or error in the most meritorious performances. This production is submitted to the candour of a generous public, who ever censure with lenity, and reward with liberality.

" It seemed to me that it is possible to compose a work upon the same plan, wherein these defects might be avoided; and the keeping, *as in* painting, *might be preserved. But then I began to fear it might happen to me as to certain translators and imitators of Shakspeare, the unities may be preserved while the spirit is evaporated; however, I ventured the attempt, and read it to a circle of friends of approved judgment."*

Fatherless Fanny, &c.

CHAPTER I.

The Seminary.

In one of those polite seminaries devoted to female instruction, with which the environs of London abound, lived Miss Bridewell, whose despotic sway within the limits of her own jurisdiction, was certainly equal to that of the most potent monarch in the civilized world, not excepting the great Napoleon himself. ***Her*** word was law—***her*** nod was *fate*—and ***her*** approbation or displeasure settled the degree of consequence enjoyed by every individual that approached her. Miss Bridewell had been many years a preceptress of youth; so many years, that she began to entertain thoughts of changing her appellation of courtesy from ***Miss*** to ***Mrs.;*** still, however, this arrangement was delayed, and the juvenile title was now the only remains of youthful pretensions. With increase of years, however, Miss Bridewell had the consolation of enjoying a proportionate increase of fortune. When she made her first *debut* as a governess, it was in a small house at Brompton, where a large board disclosed hers to be a *boarding school* for young ladies. Her talents as a school mistress, however, soon raised her

from this honourable station, and she opened *Cannondale House* with all the *eclat* of modern splendour. Still, however, amongst the numerous scholars that crowded her highly esteemed *Seminary*, some *plebeian souls* would creep in—scarcely could the immense sums their parents paid for their education, reconcile the stately Miss Bridewell to the degradation of admitting them into her circle. The happy time at length arrived, in which the flourishing state of Miss Bridewell's finances enabled her to form an *establishment* upon more exalted principles. Cannondale House was let at an enormous premium, besides an exorbitant rent, to a governess of a subordinate degree, who was glad of an opportunity of treading in the successful steps of her predecessor, and whose soul had not yet risen above the profitable task of teaching the children of *ambitious tradesmen*. The soaring mind of Miss Bridewell was not, however, so easily contented. Ladies of title, or at least of high family, were alone the object of her attention, and the name of *establishment* was given to her seminary, as having a grander sound, and better suited to her exalted ideas. Indeed, ever since the establishment of the P——— of Wales, every petty family's arrangement has assumed that dignified appellation amongst the sons and daughters of ton. We all know, however, that there are many people of high rank, who are straitened in their circumstances, and whose *names*, although they may bestow *eclat*, will not support *expence*. Miss Bridewell soon found this, and it induced her to admit a few rich heiresses, as a great favour, into the happy group that formed her *establishment*, as she was a true disciple of the world, she bestowed her favours, which cost her *nothing*, in proportion as she received those from her pupils, that cost a *great deal*. The house Miss Bridewell

inhabited was spacious and elegant, and possessed all the requisites of modern refinement. A *boudoir*, that indispensable apartment for a real fine lady; a drawing room, dining parlour, with breakfast parlour and study, were the apartments devoted to the use of the governess; whilst a very spacious room, to which she had given the appropriate title of "*la salle des sciences*," was occupied by the young ladies during their hours of improvement. The house itself stood in a shrubbery, with a velvet lawn before the door: the windows were on the French construction, and adorned by virandas, whilst the most costly display of orange trees, and other exotics of the rarest kind, gave the *coup d'œil*, to the entrance of "*Myrtle Grove*," as this retreat of the muses was poetically denominated. The decorations of the house in the inside, were in a style of elegance that corresponded with its outward appearance, and every article of furniture which has been invented to indulge the luxury, or gratify the pride of this age of refinement, were there assembled, to prove at once the taste and opulence of the proprietor.—Could it be possible for pride to be happy, Miss Bridewell must have been so, but it is well known by every common observer, that the gratification of our passions never yet gave the happiness it promised, and pride above all other feelings is the hardest to be satisfied. Miss Bridewell was far from happy, for her haughty temper was insatiable of homage, and, notwithstanding she supported *imperial* dignity amongst her immediate dependents, she always felt that uneasiness inseparable from conscious unworthiness, whenever she went into public. She fancied if she was independent, she should be more respected, and deplored the necessity there was for her continuing the occupation of governess so long after the aggrandisement of her wishes had ren-

dered every thing short of *haut-ton* degrading to her inflated pride. Her domestic establishment was on a very large scale; she had two men, a coachman, and a porter at the gate, besides a proportionate number of female servants; and this stately parade was become so necessary to her existence, that it obliged her to pursue that occupation which alone could preserve it for her. Her avarice, therefore, increased with her increasing fortune, and rendered her the ready tool of every person whose power or riches seemed to promise to assist in supporting the consequence she prized so highly. Miss Bridewell, like other ladies who have *establishments* for education, had a limited number of pupils, and as her price was exorbitant, the number was generally on the *deficit* side of the question; and, notwithstanding her constant boast of the *many* applications she was *obliged* to *refuse*, she felt herself more frequently anxious because of their poverty than their multitude.

During the Christmas vacation, in 1798, Miss Bridewell being from home on a visit at the house of one of her right honourable pupils, the care of her family was left to the inspection of the lady who was styled *sub-governess* in the teaching department. This lady, whose name was Dawson, had long been a great favourite with her employer, because her disposition was of that supple kind, that is exactly suited to an intercourse with such imperious people as Miss Bridewell, whom she took care to flatter on the weak side of her understanding, and by that means led her whichever way she pleased.

Two young ladies, who were West Indians, of large fortune, always passed the holidays at Myrtle Grove; and Mrs. Dawson was sitting one dismal evening with them in the drawing room, vainly endeavouring to dispel the ennui

that had crept into the company, by relating a long string of adventures that had befallen her during the reign of Robespierre, which term of terror had been passed by Mrs. Dawson at Paris, subject to the vicissitudes of that dreadful era. Miss Barlowe declared there was not such a *bore*, in her opinion, as *long dismal stories:* and miss Emily her sister, observed with a yawn, that she wished there existed a probability of an interruption to the *Te Deum* of their solitude, from the arrival of company. Just as she spoke, a violent ring at the carriage gate made them all jump. "Company," exclaimed Miss Emily Barlowe, dancing about in an ecstacy of joy, "company, company, and we shall have something to amuse us at last." A servant came into the room at this moment, leading a little girl by the hand, of the most prepossessing appearance, and announced to Mrs. Dawson, that a lady in a very dashing equipage desired to speak with her at the gate. Mrs. Dawson was very much disturbed at this request, as she was particularly afraid of catching cold; and one servant was sent for her shawl, another for clogs, and another for her swansdown tippet, whilst she stood lamenting the untoward circumstance that exposed her to the dreaded danger, at length she was equipped to her mind, and ordering the servant to hold an umbrella over her head, she proceeded to greet the unseasonable visitor. A thousand questions succeeded one another in swift succession to the servant that attended her, ending with a wonder of *who* it could possibly be, that had taken such a strange hour to come out of town. The man professed his ignorance, and poor Mrs. Dawson reached the carriage gate as wise as she set out. But, heavens! what was her surprise and consternation when the porter told her that the carriage was that instant gone;

"the lady waited," said he, "as long as she could ma'am, but finding you did not come, she said she must go, as her time was precious, and that she would call again; but she said, ma'am, added the man, "there was a letter in the young lady's trunk that will explain every thing. Mrs. Dawson turned herself round in high dudgeon, and walked back to the house in silence; a secret fear pervaded her mind that she should incur Miss Bridewell's displeasure, although, excepting in her time she had wasted in equiping herself, she could not be implicated in the blame of receiving the child, without seeing the person who brought it. When Mrs. Dawson returned to the drawing room, she found the two Miss Barlowe's amusing themselves with their new companion, who was a beautiful little girl, about five years old, and who appeared as much delighted with her playfellows, as they were with her. "This is the sweetest little angel that ever was seen," said Miss Emily, "pray dear Mrs. Dawson, tell me who she is? the little creature herself says she has no name beside *Fanny*." "Indeed I know nothing about her," said Mrs. Dawson, throwing herself down on the sofa, "I have a great mind to send her to the workhouse, for I suspect it is a mere swindling trick to impose the child upon Miss Bridewell." "The workhouse! dear Mrs. Dawson, how can you talk so shocking?" said Miss Barlowe, "I vow you are a worse tyrant than the horrid Robespierre you have been talking so much about." Miss Barlowe was very generous where she liked, and Mrs. Dawson had often felt the pleasing effects of her bounty; she was not willing, therefore, to incur the censure of so convenient a friend, and as she was well versed in the art of *tacking about*, she changed her note in a minute, and taking the child upon her knee, she said, "It is a pretty little creature, indeed,

ny dear; I believe I should be as unlikely as yourself to act unkindly towards her. What is your name, poppet?" continued Mrs. Dawson, addressing the child, "*Fanny*," answered the little innocent. "And your *other* name?" asked her interrogator. "I have no *other* name," said the child. "Who is your father, my dear?" "I have *none*," answered the prattler; "they used to call me *Fatherless Fanny*." "Who were those that called you so?" "I don't know," replied the child, "Mrs. Sydney was my *mamma*, and that's all I can tell you." "Oh dear!" interrupted Mrs. Dawson, giving little Fanny to Miss Barlowe, "I had forgotten to ask for the child's trunk; the porter says there is a letter in it that will explain every thing." So saying, she pulled the bell, and ordered the servant to bring up the young lady's trunk, that was just come: the servant obeyed; and the girls pressed round Mrs. Dawson, whilst she opened it, with an eagerness of curiosity, that put the innocent proprietor entirely out of their heads. On the top of the package lay a letter, directed for Miss Bridewell; and as Mrs. Dawson considered herself that lady's representative, she did not scruple to satisfy her curiosity, by opening it. The first object that presented itself to her eyes on so doing, was a bank post bill for two hundred pounds. "This ticket is not a *blank* at least," exclaimed she, holding open the note to the young ladies; she then proceeded to peruse the letter, and found the following words:—

"The young lady who will be the companion of this letter, is nobly born, and entitled to a large fortune. Reasons, which cannot with prudence be revealed, oblige her friends to conceal her in some safe retreat for a few years. Miss Bridewell is selected as the most eligible

preceptress for little Fanny, to whose care, therefore, she is consigned, with a strict charge not to spare expense or labour in the education of the child. The sum enclosed will be paid yearly into Miss Bridewell's hands for the support of her ward, who is to be distinguished by the appellation of Fanny only."

"There," said Mrs. Dawson, exultingly, "I am glad this affair has turned out so well, for I was sadly afraid we should have a hurricane at Miss Bridewell's return: but come, let us examine the little brat's wardrobe; we shall guess by that whether the account of her be true or not." The clothes were produced, and the profusion of fine muslins and expensive lace, of which they were composed, convinced the committee that Fanny was, indeed, the personage the letter described her to be. Yet no trinket or picture appeared which might serve as a guide to ascertain her identity, when she should be re-demanded by her friends after a lapse of years had altered her person. When the examination was finished, the ladies re-seated themselves on the sofa, where they found poor Fanny extended at her full length, and fast asleep. The bell was now rung, and a maid-servant ordered to attend the new comer to bed. Emily Barlowe entreated she might share her's "and do let her be my child, Mrs. Dawson, indeed I will teach her, and take care of her, and become quite a mother to her. Now say you will my *dear, dear* Dawson." "Ah you cunning puss," replied Mrs. Dawson, "thus it is that you always have your way with *me*." "Oh then I may have her!" interrupted Miss Emily, snatching the child up in her arms. "Sweet little innocent, how I shall doat upon her." "You will spoil your *shape*, Emily," said her sister, "if you carry that heavy child about, and what do you think mamma will

say when she sees you?" "*Papa* desired me not to spoil my *heart*," answered Emily, "and therefore I am sure *he* will approve of my doing and thing that keeps the amiable feelings of *humanity* in exercise." The sweet girl with her little charge in her arms, now left the room, attended by the maid; Miss Barlowe was left alone with Mrs. Dawson. "That girl," said the former, speaking of her sister, "has such plebeian notions, she will never make a *fine lady*." "Emily is very good-natured," rejoined Mrs. Dawson, "but she cer tainly wants *dignity*; that, however, will not be missed with her *petite* figure." When Emily returned to the drawing room from putting the sleeping Fanny to bed, she said, "my little girl has got the prettiest necklace and bracelets made of hair, and locked with bullion, that ever were made. I dare say they are composed of her father and mother's hair, for I can perceive there are two sorts, but I would not unclasp them, for fear of waking the little stranger."

"I dare say," said Miss Barlowe, with a sarcastic smile, "Emily will compose twenty romances upon the subject of this *enfant trouvee*." "Then they shall all have happy terminations." answered Emily, "for I am determined my dear ttle Fanny shall be a fortunate heroine."

The next day when the blooming Fanny, with her '*crisped* locks' of golden brown, her large blue eyes, and lips like the parted rose bud, made her appearance at breakfast, every beholder was charmed, and "sweet little creature," echoed from every tongue. Even Mrs. Dawson, who was generally apathy itself, where interest did not excite emotion, felt her heart moved in favour of the little stranger. Innumerable questions were addressed to the sweet prattler, but her lisping accents gave but little satisfaction to the curiosity of her interrogators. They could only learn by

their questions that she had no *papa*, that she had been used to live in very fine rooms, and that Mrs. Sydney was her *mamma*, and that she was a *very old lady*, and wore a black hood over her cap like a *picture*, and that a pretty lady used to kiss her at night after she was in bed, and cry over her, and call her poor Fatherless Fanny, and that she never saw that lady excepting at night. This was the sum total of what they could collect, and they were obliged accordingly to give over questioning her. Of the bracelets and necklace which she wore, and which had "Fanny" engraved, at full length, in the inside of the clasps, she could give no other account than that she *found* them on her neck and arms one morning when she waked, and that Mamma Sydney had said the fairies brought them because she was a *good girl*.

After little Fanny's arrival at Myrtle Grove, no complaint was made by the young ladies of the *ennui* that had hitherto consumed them; her frolicsome gambols could even induce Miss Barlowe to dispense with her *dignity*, and join the little fairy on the lawn before the house; but Emily perfectly doated upon her adopted child, and could scarcely be prevailed upon by Mrs. Dawson to practise the hours which her progress in music demanded. At length Miss Bridewell came home from her visit in a very ill-humour; her vanity was considerably inflated by the attentions she had received during her stay at the Marquis of Petersfield's; but, alas! her purse had not been proportionably increased; for, although her account for Lady Maria and Lady Isabella Trentham's education, was of three years' standing, no notice was taken of discharging it. The fear of losing such honours as she could not enjoy elsewhere, deterred Miss Bridewell from pressing her demand, and an additional share of the Marquis and Marchioness's good graces was

the consequence of such complaisance; but as I have before observed, neither honours nor good graces will support a household, and Miss Bridewell, much as she loved great people's sufferance, *felt* most sensibly that it might be purchased too *dearly*. *She* had her extravagances as well as the lords and ladies with whom she was so fond of associating, and it was abominably provoking to think that she could not purchase their society, without giving up the hopes of receiving what could alone enable her to support the additional expence incurred by its indulgence.

Full of these reflections Miss Bridewell entered her own mansion. It was evening when she arrived, and little Fanny was already retired to bed. Mrs. Dawson was summoned to attend Miss Bridewell in her *boudoir*, as soon as she had a little recovered the fatigue of her journey; and requested her to give an account of the occurrences during her absence. The wily favourite perceiving that her superior was disconcerted at something which had crossed her wishes, endeavoured to find out *what* the grievance was, before she began her narrative, that she might *suit* her story to the humour of the moment; with a look of anxiety, therefore, and an affectionate pressure of the hand, she said, "excuse me, dear madam, but I cannot speak on any subject foreign to the one that now engrosses my mind, until you have quieted my apprehensions respecting yourself: your looks betray uneasiness; deign to confide your sorrow to the most faithful of your friends?" "You are a good creature, Dawson," replied Miss Bridewell, "and deserve to be trusted; your anxiety, however, has overrated my present grievances, as I assure you they are nothing more than what spring from pecuniary disappointment. The Marquis has not settled that long account, nor even offered to accommodate me with a part, and

I have some payments to make, that would render a couple of hundreds very acceptable to me just now; as all the money I am *sure* of receiving, is appropriated before it comes, for the expences of the last year. It is very hard to be obliged to abridge myself of *all* those enjoyments which are suited to my taste, and to which my pretentions are certainly well founded: two hundred pounds would be absolutely worth four to me at this moment." Mrs. Dawson smiled, and turning out of the room without speaking, went in search of her pocket book, which contained the bank bill that had been received with little Fanny. So fortunate an opening to her cause was, indeed, as far above her hopes as her expectations; and like a skilful lawyer, Mrs. Dawson knew well how to take advantage of it. When she re-entered the room, she presented the pocket book to Miss Bridewell. "Would to heaven," said she, "it were always in my power to administer thus fortunately to your exigencies, what wish of my dear friend's would then remain ungratified?" Miss Bridewell looked surprised, but mechanically opening the book, she cast her eye upon the bank bill. "My dear Dawson," said she, as she took it in her hand, "what can this mean?" "It means, my dear madam, that the two hundred pounds you were just wishing for is there, at your command." Mrs. Dawson then related the story of Fanny's arrival—produced the letter, and described the child as a perfect cherub in beauty, and a prodigy in sense. Her narrative was worded in a manner so well suited to Miss Bridewell's particularities, that it had the effect upon her mind her narrator intended it should. The seasonable supply of two hundred pounds at a moment when it was so much wanted, had put her into a good humour, and the artful manner in which the tale had been unfolded, com

pleted the favourable impression. Fanny was received at her *levee* the next morning, in the most gracious manner; Emily Barlowe was highly commended for having noticed the "*sweet little creature,*" as Miss Bridewell styled her new pupil, and of course it became the order of the day at Myrtle Grove to make "Fatherless Fanny," (as she sometimes pathetically called herself) the favourite of all those who aspired to its lofty mistress's good graces. Every visitor was shewn the "*lovely girl,*" and were told, with a significant nod, that time would prove the child to be *somebody*. Never was there a happier being than little Fanny; endowed by nature with a sweet temper, and the most buoyant spirits, enjoying the favour of every creature that approached her, her little heart beat responsive to the blissful feelings of affection and gratitude. Emily Barlowe was, however, the dearest object of her infantile love, and on her gentle bosom the sweet prattler generally composed herself to sleep, when the hour of retirement arrived. To Emily, Fanny was now become the *sumum bonum* of happiness, who filled up every moment of leisure with the delightful task of instructing her darling, to whom every accomplishment was imparted, her tender age was capable of receiving. Lady Maria Trentham was very fond of Fanny too, and vied with Emily Barlowe in the task of instructing her, and such was the zeal of the teachers, and such the capacity of the scholar, that the little favourite soon became a miracle of cleverness, and was cited as an example to girls twice her age, not only for application but acquirements.

At the end of the first year, Miss Bridewell, who had *depended* upon the annual *two hundred*, promised in Fanny's recommendatory letter, felt herself extremely inconvenienced at its not ap-

pearing; but when a second year elapsed, and no notice was taken either of the promise or the child her patience was entirely exhausted. Poor Fanny was no longer a favourite; but a little troublesome brat, that had been imposed upon her credulity by some designing person, who, depending upon the *benevolence* of her heart, imagined she would keep the child for *nothing*, when once it had got such hold of her affection, as to make it painful to her to part with it; however, they would find themselves mistaken, for she was not a person to be imposed upon in that manner. Emily Barlowe, who was present when Miss Bridewell was venting her spleen upon this irritating subject, thought to herself "those who depend upon the *benevolence* of *your* heart, *must* find themselves *mistaken*." "I will get rid of the little troublesome impostor," continued the incensed Miss Bridewell, "I am determined I will do so immediately. Nobody shall *dare* to treat *me* in this manner with impunity: I will advertise the girl in the most popular newspapers, and if *that* expedient does not make her friends come forward, I will send the *chit* to the workhouse, where she ought to have been sent at first, if Dawson had not been a *fool*." "My dear Miss Bridewell," said the amiable Emily, as soon as she could get in a word, "my dear Miss Bridewell, let *me* plead for this poor little innocent, try *one* year more before you have recourse to such severe measures; perhaps the most fatal consequences may accrue to her unfortunate mother, if you should advertise the particulars of this mysterious story, and may prove the ultimate ruin of the dear child. If nobody comes forward in that time, I will pay you the expenses of this year of *grace* out of my own allowance; and if you are determined to *part* with the lovely orphan, I will write to papa for permission to adopt her, and take her with me to Ja-

maica when I leave school." Miss Bridewell knew her own interest too well to refuse such a request as the foregoing. She arrogated considerable merit, however, in the concession, and Fatherless Fanny, as she was now generally denominated by her governess, was permitted to remain at Myrtle Grove, the cherished object of the benevolent Emily's affection, for the space of another year.

That year elapsed like the former two, and yet Fanny was not claimed by any friend, neither was any money remitted for her support, and the gentle Emily was obliged to pay, out of her allowance, the charge made by Miss Bridewell for the last year. This sacrifice of all the good girl's other extra expenses, was made with the most perfect good will, in favour of her little darling, yet it was not rewarded with the satisfaction so benevolent an action was entitled to; for, alas! in answer to the pathetic letter she had sent to her father, pleading the cause of the unfortunate orphan, she received one from her mother, couched in terms of high displeasure:—"I have intercepted the ridiculous letter you addressed to your father," said Mrs. Barlowe, "and I consider it a lucky circumstance that it fell into my hands, as I know his *silly* good nature would most likely have led him to comply with your romantic request. I desire I may never hear of such a thing again. Adopt a child indeed! I fancy you will find uses enough for your fortune, when you get it into your hands, without encumbering yourself with brats that are nothing to you. Caroline would never have thought of such a thing; I am sure she has too much prudence and good sense to encourage such ridiculous propensities. Remember, girl, '*charity begins at home.*'"

This severe injunction was a cruel blow upon the tender-hearted Emily, who thus lost the power of snatching her dear Fanny from the

evils that threatened her. The good girl well knew that if she could obtain her father's ear, her request would be granted; but after this prohibition from her mother, she did not dare to risk another letter on the same subject. Only one year was now wanting for the completion of the Miss Barlowe's education; they were then to return to Jamaica, and Emily consoled herself with the reflection, that at least when she saw her father, she should be able to accomplish her wishes respecting Fanny, if that dear girl should then stand in need of her assistance. Lady Maria Trentham, who was Emily's particular friend, would gladly have assisted her in maintaining Fanny; but, alas, a profusion of fine clothes, and an unnecessary display of trinkets, besides a truly benevolent heart, was all the poor girl possessed. Any thing would have been granted her, indeed, by her indulgent mother, that did not require *ready* money, for of that pleasing article there could not be less in any house than in that of the noble Marquis of Petersfield; but poor Lady Maria knew it was of no use to offer any thing short of the *ready* to Miss Bridewell, who was already in Hamlet's case, namely—"*promised crammed.*"

The expedient of advertising the helpless Fanny was therefore adverted to by Miss Bridewell, without farther delay, to the no small concern of that lovely girl's juvenile patronesses, who daily mixed their tears together at the idea of their favourite being removed from their society. The following is the advertisement which appeared in the most popular papers of the day, relative to the forsaken Fanny, and which Miss Bridewell dictated herself—

CHILD FOUND.

Whereas some ill-minded Person or Persons,

left a little Girl at the house of Miss Bridewell, Myrtle Grove, three years ago, with an intention, no doubt, of defrauding that lady of the maintenance of the said child. This is to give notice, that unless the before-mentioned little Girl be taken away from Myrtle Grove, within one month from the date hereof, she will be sent to the Workhouse. The child answers to the name of Fanny.

CHAPTER II.

A Misunderstanding.

Lord Ellincourt was a young nobleman of that thoughtless kind, which is but too often met with in this dissipated age. He was addicted to every species of gaming, not from natural inclination, but an acquired habit of idleness. His lordship possessed abilities calculated to shine in the senate, had their latent powers been drawn forth by that best finisher of a good education—I mean the society of the wise and virtuous. Instead of that, however, this young sprig of nobility had been precipitated into the vortex of extravagance and folly, by his connexions at college, where so many of his Right Honourable cousins assailed him with the temptations, into which they had long been initiated themselves, that between precept and example, his mind became perverted, and he forsook the paths of learning for those of dissipation, and soon preferred *killing* time, by a thousand extravagant follies, to the sober enjoyment of *spending* it in rational amusements, or valuable acquirements. At his *debut* in the great world, Lord Ellincourt kept a stud of race-horses

for the sake of *employment:* two packs of hounds for the same reason; and for the same good motive, when the pleasures of London confined him to the metropolis for the *season*, (winter is no longer in *fashion)* he drove, with the fury of a *Jehu*, a *tandem*, *dog-cart*, a *mail*, and an *inexplicable*, to the astonishment of the natives, and the imminent danger of the sober foot passengers who came in his way, whilst taking his dashing round through Bond-street, Pall Mall, St. James's-street, and Piccadilly. Lord Ellincourt, like most men of fashion, had many *favourites* amongst the *fair* sex, but few upon whose fidelity he could place much reliance. One exception, however, he had long been in possession of, who although a female, had never *for an* instant broken her faith. *Some* of his favourites received his lordship according to the state of his finances, and smiled or frowned in proportion to the golden shower that fell into their laps from his bounty; but his little *Fan* was invariable in the display of her affection, and lavished her caresses upon her beloved lord without considering whether he had had a run of good or ill luck. His lordship was not ungrateful, and his regard for Fan was quite equal to the one she felt for him, nor did he ever think himself happy when she was not by his side. Whithersoever he went, his faithful friend went with him, and even partook of his bed-room; but lest I should be supposed to be a retailer of scandalous anecdotes, I must beg leave, in this place, to inform my readers that poor Fan was a *four-footed lady*, and therefore the intimacy that subsisted between her and Lord Ellincourt could reflect no disgrace on either party. A misfortune, however, happened, that disturbed the happiness of this loving pair. Poor Fan was stolen away, and every effort to find her proved ineffectual, although advertisements, offering large rewards, were inserte-

in all the papers. The loss of his dear little favourite had been the theme of Lord Ellincourt's conversation for many weeks, and his gay companions began to grow weary of the subject. "What nonsense it is," said Colonel Ross to Sir Henry Ambersley, to be obliged to listen to Ellincourt's lamentations for the loss of his little mongrel, every time one meets him."

"Let's hoax him," replied Sir Henry, "and cure him of such nonsensical prosing." "In what manner," asked his friend." "I'll shew you," replied Sir Henry, taking a newspaper that lay before them on the table, and pointing out Miss Bridewell's advertisement. "But what will that do?" again asked Colonel Ross; "what hoax can you make of that stupid paragraph?" "You shall see," answered Sir Henry, "here comes Ellincourt, and I will put my scheme into execution immediately." Lord Ellincourt entered the coffee room at the same instant, and coming up to the two friends, he asked, with his usual ***nonchalnace***, "what news." "The best in the world," replied Sir Henry, "your little Fan is found." "The deuce she is? but tell me, my dear fellow, the ***wheres*** and the ***hows***, and ***all that?***" "I'll read you the advertisement," answered Sir Henry, taking the paper in his hand and reading Miss Bridewell's advertisement aloud, only substituting the word dog in the place of child and girl, whenever they occurred, suppressing the date, and concluding line, respecting the workhouse, and adding a ***threat*** to hang the poor animal, if not reclaimed within a month. "What a barbarian!" exclaimed Lord Ellincourt, "to talk of hanging poor little ***Fan***. If she was to do it I would burn the old ***faggot***. I will drive down there directly. I know Myrtle Grove ***immensely*** well, I have been there to see the Trenthams, with my mother. A queer old figure that said governess is; I remem-

her her well. I did not like her *phiz*. May I be *bamboozled* the next Newmarket meeting, if I don't scalp the old savage with my own hands, should I find she has used Fan ill, mind that." Sir Henry and Colonel Ross laughed, "take care you don't get into the *stocks*, my boy," said he, "remember you will be on *classic* ground, and don't sin against the muses." "Confusion seize the muses, and the classic ground too," rejoined my lord, "little *Fan* is worth all Parnassus put together.—Adieu—I am off, I will bring little Fan back, or the old Gorgon's head, I am determined upon that." "Had not your Lordship better *read* the advertisement yourself, before you set out," said Colonel Ross, offering the paper. "Oh! no, no," replied Lord Ellincourt, "there *can* be no mistake, the description answers exactly, and the poor little animal being shut up in that bore of a place is the reason I have not been able to find her before." As he spoke, his impatient Lordship hastened out of the room, and left his two friends laughing at the credulity with which he had taken the hoax. "I little imagined," said Col. Ross, "that he would have swallowed the bait so easily." "You are a pretty fellow, too, a'nt you?" replied Sir Henry, "I thought you would have spoiled the joke. *Quiz* me if I would not give a *cool* hundred to be present when he and the old governess get at it, tooth and nail." "What do you think they will fight?" "I am sure of it," answered Sir Henry: "Ellincourt will insist upon having his dog, the old girl will say she has not got it, and then there will be a quarrel. She is a very dragon, my sister tells me, and Ellincourt is *Cayenne* itself: so if there be not a *row*, I shall be surprised." This was by much too good a joke to be confined to two people; after a hearty laugh, therefore, the fashionable pair strolled out on purpose "to *set it a-going*," and to prepare a

merry meeting for their friend Ellincourt, at his return from Myrtle Grove.

In the meantime Lord Ellincourt proceeded to the livery stables, where his horses stood, and ordering his grooms to prepare his tandem immediately, and to follow him to Hyde Park, he walked thither, anticipating the joy he should experience, when little Fan was restored to him. The drive to Myrtle Grove appeared of an immoderate length, so impatient was his lordship to reach the place that contained his long-lost favourite. At length the white gate, leading to the sweep before the mansion, struck his eye, and giving a renovating crack of his whip to increase the speed of his barbs, the dashing equipage presently stopped before it. The porter answering in the affirmative to the question whether Miss Bridewell was at home, Lord Ellincourt alighted and was ushered into the elegant *boudoir* of the *modish* governess. His lordship's patience experienced a severe trial, whilst waiting the arrival of the antiquated virgin; for having sent in his name, the lady was too anxious to appear in *style* to think of coming before his lordship until she had consulted her mirror, to ascertain the exact state of her dress, in performing this *necessary* sacrifice to the graces, Miss Bridewell perceived that her cap did not become her, and she changed it for another; then her *gown* did not please her, and she ordered her maid to bring her last new dress, which was substituted for the one she had on: when completely equipped, she descended to her expecting visitor; who, having examined every picture, and turned over every newspaper that lay upon the table, was standing whistling in one of the windows when Miss Bridewell entered the room. She began a long apology, which, however, Lord Ellincourt interrupted in the middle, by saying, "dear madam, excuse my impatience·

your advertisement informs me that you have got my little Fan, and I am in a great hurry to see the dear creature." "And does little Fanny belong to your lordship," exclaimed Miss Bridewell, in a tone of surprise, whilst a smile of complaisance expressed the pleasure she felt at the intelligence. "How happy I feel that the dear little creature fell into my hands. I am sure your lordship will be satisfied with the care I have taken of her." "You are very good, ma'am," answered his lordship, with an impatient inclination of the head, "I have no doubt of your kindness to the little thing, but I really wish to see her; she is a great favourite of mine, and so was her mother." "Your lordship was acquainted with Fanny's mother, then," said Miss Bridewell, drawing up her mouth in a formal manner." "Oh yes," answered his lordship, laughing,—"her mother and I were old acquaintances." Miss Bridewell's formality increased at this speech of his lordship's, but her features were rather relaxed at the conclusion of it, for he added, "and so indeed, was her father, I was very fond of him too." "And pray, my lord," asked the prim lady, "what is become of poor Fanny's father, I understood he was dead?" "I wonder by what means you ever heard any thing about him," replied Lord Ellincourt, "however, if it will be any satisfaction to you to know it, I must inform you he was *hanged*, about to years ago." "*Hanged!* Did your lordship say *hanged?*" exclaimed Miss Bridewell, with horror and astonishment painted on her features. "Yes, my good ma'am," answered his lordship, with a smile, "the poor fellow was really *hanged* for *sheep-stealing;* I did what I could to save him, but my interest failed, he was caught in the fact, and the farmer would not hear of *pardon*. But what's the matter, Miss Bridewell, you look frightened?' "And enough

to make me so, I think, my lord." answered she, "to reflect that I have been harbouring the daughter of a *sheep-stealer* in my house all this time." "Oh! is that all ?" answered Lord Ellincourt, laughing, "don't let that frighten you; my life upon it little Fan will never meddle with your *lambs*. I don't intend to allow her to stay any longer among them." "I assure your lordship," said Miss Bridewell, with a haughty toss of her head, "the contamination has already been too great. But pray, my lord, what is become of the mother of this unfortunate female, is she still alive ?" "No, she is *dead too*," answered his lordship, "I *kept* her as long as she lived, and so I mean to do by Fan, if you will but have the goodness to put an end to this long catechism, and let me have the dear little creature." "I have no intention of detaining her, I assure your lordship, but I beg leave to observe, that I shall expect to be reimbursed for the expenses I have been at in her maintenance and education." "The maintenance of such a little animal," replied his lordship, "cannot be much to be sure, but as to her education, I am certainly no judge of what that may be, for I cannot imagine what the deuce you can have taught her, she knew how to *fetch* and *carry* before I lost her." "Your lordship talks in a very odd strain," answered Miss Bridewell, "but I can produce the masters bills who have been employed to teach her *music*, *dancing*, and *drawing*." Lord Ellincourt burst into an immoderate fit of laughter. "Excuse me, Miss Bridewell, but really I cannot help it. You *educating* ladies are for instructing every thing that comes near you, or you never would have thought of teaching my poor *Fan* such a long list of accomplishments; however, to make all straight, I will agree thus to your demand, if you will prove to me that your scholar has learned *any thing* of what you

pretend to have taught her, I will pay for it whatever you think proper to charge, for, upon my soul, I think I shall make my fortune by shewing the little creature about the streets. *Dancing* she *may* have acquired, but as to any thing else, excuse me if I don't believe a word of it" "Your lordship is at liberty to think what you please," answered Miss Bridewell, haughtily, "but I shall insist upon being paid, before I give up the child. I will fetch her to convince your lordship that she *has capacity*, and that she has received *instruction*." So saying, Miss Bridewell flounced out of the room, and left Lord Ellincourt mute with astonishment.—"That old maid," at length said he, "is so used to have children under her care, that when she gets a *dog* into her clutches, she fancies she must educate that, and talks about it till she believes a spaniel is a child." Miss Bridewell was absent only a few minutes, and she returned leading Fanny by the hand, whose terrified countenance and streaming eyes plainly evinced the severity with which her governess had just been treating her. Fanny was now turned of eight years old, a tall elegantly-formed child, whose dazzling complexion and beautiful features were calculated to strike every beholder with admiration. Lord Ellincourt gazed at her with surprise, mingled with delight. "What a sweet creature!" exclaimed his lordship, "but why is she weeping?" "There, my lord, is little Fanny," said Miss Bridewell, not noticing his question, "and if your lordship was really as fond of her worthless parents as you pretend to have been, you will not think much at paying the debts their offspring has contracted." "Upon my honour, madam," replied Lord Ellincourt, "I am wholly at a loss to guess what you are aiming at; I never had the honour of seeing the parents of that sweet girl, at least to the best of my knowledge." "Why

good heavens!" exclaimed Miss Bridewell, 'did not your lordship say, not a quarter of an hour ago, that her father was *hanged* for *sheep-stealing* and that her mother was a *naughty kept woman?*" "Who, I?" rejoined Lord Ellincourt, starting, "I never even *imagined* such a thing." "I am astonished at your lordship; indeed I am," said Miss Bridewell, her eyes flashing resentment, "did not your lordship say you were come to fetch Fanny away, and that you intended keeping her as long as she lived, as you had done her mother, and all that we hesitated about was respecting the payment of my demand for her education?" "Here has been a great mistake," replied Lord Ellincourt, "and I feel very much ashamed of having occasioned you so much trouble. I came here, madam, at the instigation of a friend of mine, who told me you had found a little *dog*, belonging to me, which I lost some time ago. The little animal's name was ***Fanny***, and hence originated the mistake. My friend, Sir Henry Ambersley, read an advertisement to me this morning, stating that the creature was found, and might be heard of *here*. I am persuaded he did it for a hoax, of which he is too fond, a circumstance I ought to have recollected when he was playing off this morning; but the joy of finding Fan was predominant, and swallowed up every other consideration." "It is, indeed, a strange circumstance," replied Miss Bridewell, "and has been productive of much trouble to me." "I am very sorry, very sorry upon my soul," answered Lord Ellincourt, and what concerns me more than any thing else is, that I fear I have occasioned sorrow to this beautiful little angel," taking Fanny's hand who had dried up her tears when she heard his lordship declare that she was not the daughter of a *sheep-stealer*. Miss Bridewell reached a newspaper which contained her advertisement, and

begged Lord Ellincourt to read it. As soon as he had complied with her request, he said, "and is it possible you intend to send this child to the workhouse?" "Yes, my lord, unless she be reclaimed by the time I have specified." "By heavens you shall not!" said his lordship, "I will pay for her myself, if no one comes forward to claim her. I will keep a horse or two less at Newmarket, to enable me to do it. Do you agree to that, Miss Bridewell?" Miss Bridewell smiled, and was vastly pleased with such an arrangement. "Your lordship understands there are *arrears*!" "Undoubtedly; and as I have just had a run of good luck, let us strike a balance now, let us have your bill." Miss Bridewell complied with his request; and presenting her exorbitant demand, which she had got ready drawn out in case of any application from the child's friends. Lord Ellincourt only looked at the sum total, and immediately drew upon his banker for the amount. "There," said he, "remember now Fanny is *my* child henceforward, and mind you use the little angel kindly, or blame me if I don't blow your house up with gunpowder. I may come to see her sometimes, mayn't I?" added his lordship. "Certainly, my lord," answered Miss Bridewell, curtseying low, "we shall always esteem your lordship's visits an honour, and Fanny I am sure ought to love Lord Ellincourt." "And so I do most dearly, dearly," answered the sweet girl, holding up her lovely face to kiss her benefactor, "I shall pray for Lord Ellincourt every night and morning, and so will Emily Barlowe and Lady Maria Trentham, for they have been so unhappy about me." Lord Ellincourt embraced his adopted child, and said that he never felt so happy in his life; "No, by heavens," added he, "not even when my Miss Tiffany beat Sir Jeffery Dollman's Ganderface, and the bets won two thousand gu-

neas. "Apropos," said his lordship, turning back as he was leaving the room, after having embraced Fanny half a dozen times for farewell, "I forgot, I ought to see the Lady Trenthams', they are my cousins." Miss Bridewell entreated his lordship to defer that intention until his next visit, and after some hesitation he complied, and hastening to his carriage, dashed off in an instant. Fanny, who accompanied her governess to the door, to witness his departure, followed the carriage with her eyes full of tears, "what a dear sweet gentleman that is," said the innocent girl, "Oh how I love him." "He is a very generous man indeed," said Miss Bridewell, and well she might say so, for he paid her enormous charge for the whole time Fanny had been with her. The two hundred pounds that came with her, and Miss Barlowe's generous contribution, were therefore a clear profit, and Fatherless Fanny thus became one of the most advantageous scholars she had ever had.

CHAPTER III.

Mutual Explanation.

When Fanny returned to the apartment where he other young ladies were, she entered it with a lively bound, and running up to Miss Emily Barlowe, clasped her arms about her neck; the good-natured Emily's tears flowed so fast, that she could not speak; but Miss Barlowe, the haughty Caroline, came and disengaged Fanny

from her sister's embrace, saying, in an ill-natured tone of voice, "this disgraceful intimacy has endured long enough, I insist now upon its termination." Fanny looked aghast, and turning her eyes upon the other ladies, observed contempt and abhorrence painted on every countenance, excepting those of Emily and the compassionate Lady Maria Trentham, who, rising from her seat, took the terrified girl by the hand, and said "don't be frightened, Fanny, I will always be your friend." "Indeed, but I say nay to that," interrupted Lady Isabella, "a very pretty story, truly, for the Marquis of Petersfield's daughter to be the companion of a *sheep-stealer's child.*" Here all the girls burst into a fit of laughter, and poor Fanny was so overcome, that, covering her face with her hands, she sobbed aloud. Emily Barlowe could not support the sight of her favourite's sorrow, but taking her in her arms, she pressed her to her bosom. "Nothing short of a parent's commands shall induce me to forsake this dear child," said she, "let her be the daughter of what she will." Soothed by this kindness poor Fanny recovered her speech —"I am not a sheep-stealer's daughter; indeed Miss Emily it was all a mistake, for Lord Ellincourt said so" "Lord Ellincourt!" exclaimed Lady Maria Trentham, "was it Lord Ellincourt who has just been here? he is my cousin!" "I know it," replied Fanny, "and his Lordship asked Miss Bridewell to let him see you and Lady Isabella; but she begged him to wait until he called next time." "Is he coming again soon?' asked Lady Maria; "Yes," replied Fanny, "very soon. Oh how I love Lord Ellincourt." "And so do I," said Lady Maria, "he is so good-natured. I wonder why Miss Bridewell would not let us see him." "I don't know," answered Fanny. Miss Bridewell generally had a motive for what she did, that concerned herself nearer than any body else

and such was the case in the present instance; for her only reason for refusing Lord Ellincourt's request, was, that she wished to conceal, from a person who had evinced such natural benevolence as his lordship had done, the cruelty of her own heart, which had led her to treat poor Fanny with such unmerited severity, upon the strength of a mere surmise. When Miss Bridewell had quitted the room to fetch Fanny to Lord Ellincourt, her mind was impressed with the idea of the imputed worthlessness of the child's parents, and proud of an opportunity of revenging the anxiety she had suffered on her account, she immediately spread the report of poor Fanny being the daughter of a sheep-stealer, by exclaiming, when she entered, *la salle des sciences*, "where is the worthless girl I have been wasting so much care upon?" Then seizing Fanny's hand with an ill-natured jirk, she added, "a pretty creature you are, to be sure, Miss, to be brought into the society of young ladies of rank, a sheep stealer's daughter!!!" The young ladies looked astonished: "Yes, indeed, ladies, said Miss Bridewell, "this girl is the offspring of a kept mistress, and a man that was hanged for *sheep-stealing*." The conseqence of such a speech to a group of young girls, proud of their births and tenacious of their consequence, may readily be imagined; every one was unanimous in execrating the innocent object of their hatred with the exception of Lady Maria Trentham and Emily Barlowe, who could only weep over a misfortune they could not remedy. The joy these benevolent girls experienced when they heard Fanny say the whole was a mistake, may be readily imagined, and when it was confirmed by Miss Bridewell herself, who related the story of the dog, as an elucidation of the mistake, a hearty laugh removed every vestige of sorrow and displeasure; and the sweet Fanny was restored to

the same portion of favour she before enjoyed with every one of her school mates.

When Mrs. Dawson was informed that the hurricane had subsided, she made her appearance in the circle she had quitted at the first intimation of Miss Bridewell's displeasure, for, as she had been the ostensible person in receiving Fanny, she well knew, if the disagreeable report proved true, she should be a material sufferer, both from her stately superior and the young ladies. Lord Ellincourt's generosity, however, had put Miss Bridewell into such a perfect good humour, that Fanny was once more her "*little poppet;*" and Mrs. Dawson from a "*great fool,*" was become her "*dear Dawson,*" and received the pleasing intelligence of the debt contracted by Fanny, having been so nobly discharged, as well as the promise made by Lord Ellincourt of supporting the little orphan in future. "The turn off about the *dog*, my dear Dawson," said Miss Bridewell, "was extremely well done, but I assure you it did not impose upon me, for I firmly believe, at this moment, that Fanny is Lord Ellincourt's daughter; but as much good may be drawn from keeping the girl, you may be sure I shall not breathe my suspicions, and I desire you to be equally circumspect." "Oh! you know my dear ma'am, that you can rely upon my prudence. I am as secret as the grave; but do you really think Fanny can be Lord Ellincourt's daughter? I understood his lordship was only just two-and-twenty, and Fanny, you know, is turned of eight. Miss Bridewell paused—then answered, in an impatient tone, "I don't care how old either of them are, I have adopted my opinion, and I am not apt to relinquish my opinions when once formed." Mrs. Dawson knew this as well as Miss Bridewell, she therefore acquiesced without farther disputation and

Miss Bridewell proceeded to give directions respecting Fanny's future acquirements; notwithstanding her boast to Lord Ellincourt, no masters had attended the poor girl since the defalcation of the payment. Miss Emily Barlowe had supplied their place to the utmost of her abilities, that her favourite might not entirely lose the accomplishments in which she was making such rapid progress. "That girl must be attended to *now*," said Miss Bridewell, "for I dare say she will go somewhere in the holidays, where her advancement will be ascertained." "I will observe what you say, my dear ma'am," said the supple Mrs. Dawson, "you know the neglect she has experienced was at your own suggestion." "Yes, yes," replied Miss Bridewell, "I am aware of that, but no doubt, you remember the old French adage—"*Point d'argent, point de suisse* and so it ought to be at Myrtle Grove." "Undoubtedly," rejoined Mrs. Dawson, "we must not throw our attention upon *beggars*."

Whilst matters were settling according to this *prudent* plan, at Myrtle Grove, Lord Ellincourt pursued his way to London, singing to himself, with a *gaiete de cœur* of which, till that moment, he had been insensible: this may appear a paradoxical assertion, after what has been said respecting the thoughtless life his lordship had hitherto led, but to any of my readers, who may have trod the flowery paths of dissipated pleasure, it will not be deemed impossible that a disciple of *Circe*, should be a stranger to *genuine heart-felt* satisfaction—that sweet sensation of the soul, is the result of conscious virtue, and the first time Lord Ellincourt experienced its happy influence, was when he first reflected on a benevolent action; it was not that his lordship was destitute of humanity, or insensible to feeling, but from a na-

tural thoughtlessness of disposition, and an habitual propensity to dissipation, that he had never before adopted the plan of extending the hand of charity to the sons and daughters of misfortune, as an expedient against the *ennui* of which he was always complaining. Chance had now thrown an opportunity in his way, trying a new kind of *delassement*, and the result of the experiment was a determination on the part of his lordship to pursue the path that had been struck out for him. The motion of the light vehicle he was driving was not more rapid than the progress of the ideas that succeeded each other in Lord Ellincourt's mind, as he returned towards the metropolis.—Fanny, the lovely artless Fanny, was the subject of all these cogitations, and the fascination that had seized his mind, increased with every recollection. Her interesting countenance, at the moment he first beheld her, still seemed to rise before him; her blooming cheeks suffused with pearly drops; her eyes of '*softest blue*,' turned with a supplicating look towards him, that might have softened the most obdurate heart.—"Sweet creature!" said his lordship, as he drove along, "I never spent money with such delight as that I paid for her to day. She shall be my child! by heavens she shall, and I will maintain her like a little princess!" This resolution filled Lord Ellincourt's heart with pleasure, and when he drove through the turnpike, at Hyde Park Corner, he was so absorbed in the agreeable reverie he had indulged in, that he did not perceive Colonel Ross and Sir Henry Ambersley, who were strolling arm in arm along the *pave*, expressly for the purpose of way-laying his lordship on his return. "Ellincourt," exclaimed Sir Henry, exalting his voice into the tones of Stentor, "where's little Fan?" Lord Ellincourt drew up to the side of the pavement, and extended his hand to Sir

Henry, "a thousand thanks my dear fellow," said he, "for procuring me the greatest pleasure I ever experienced in my life. The little Fan you sent me in search of, instead of a *dog* is an *angel*. "What, have you been peeping at *Winnifred* Bridewell's pretty heiresses; *Eh*, Ellincourt?" said Sir Henry. Lord Ellincourt gave the reins, to his groom, and descending from his carriage, he joined his friends. *Old Bridewell* is a down right divinity, and Myrtle Grove superior to *Ida* itself," said his lordship, putting an arm through that of the friend on each side of him. "He's *caught*, by all that's striking," said Col. Ross, "old Bridewell knows what she's about, I warrant her; she has been *showing off some title-hunting Miss*, and the trap has taken a lord. A true bill, is it not, Ellincourt?" "That my heart is touched, I allow," replied his lordship, "and by a pretty girl too; but it is an artless amour, I assure you, on both sides, and owing entirely to your hoax about the dog, Ambersley. It is an attachment that will last for life, however, I am persuaded, and when I shew the object of my affection, if you do not say she is the most fascinating creature you ever saw, I will never cite you for men of taste again as long as I live." "But *when* shall we see her?" asked Sir Henry, "for you have set me longing; is the *show* open to every body?" "Oh! no," said Col. Ross, "I suppose Ellincourt has ordered her to be shut up until he puts his coronet on her brow. Is it not so?" "Time will shew," answered his lordship, "but this I will promise you, next time I go to Myrtle Grove, I will take *one* of you, for I suppose they will not grant admission to *three* such sad dogs, and then you will be better able to form your judgment of my *charmer*." "Hoax for hoax, my word for it," said Colonel Ross, "Ellincourt is only playing at *reprisals*. He has been

put into the *stocks* at Myrtle Grove, for his ill-behaviour, and he wants to get us into the same scrape." "You may do as you like about going," rejoined his lordship, "but I give you my word I am in earnest; I never was more serious in my life; and to prove it, I intend persuading my mother to accompany me in my next visit. I shall drive her in my mail, and you can sit with me upon the *dickey*." "I will go with you," said Col. Ross, "if you are not afraid of a *militaire*. If I should rival you, it would not be so well." "True," rejoined Lord Ellincourt, "but I am fearless on that subject. *My Fanny* will love *me* best, see who she will." "I do not feel so sure of that," said Sir Henry Ambersley, "and as I have no inclination to measure swords with you, I will abstain from going." "*Comme il vous plaira*." answered Lord Ellincourt, and the subject was immediately changed.

The whim of adopting Fanny, did not turn out like most of Lord Ellincourt's former whims, it survived the lapse of several days, and seemed to acquire strength from reflection. The Dowager Lady Ellincourt, his lordship's mother, was one of those indulgent parents that feel every other sentiment absorbed in their maternal tenderness. Her ladyship had been left a young widow, and although several very advantageous offers had been made her, she had remained in the solitary state of widowhood out of pure affection to her children.

Lady Ellincourt had only two children living; the son of whom we have been speaking, and one daughter who was some years older than her brother. Lady Caroline Mason had been married at the early age of seventeen, to the Earl of Castlebrazil, an Irish nobleman, and resided chiefly in that country. Lord Ellincourt was therefore his mother's only solace, and there was

no request that he could make her, with which she did not feel eager to comply. Her ladyship was at her Villa at Richmond, when Lord Ellincourt paid his visit to Myrtle Grove: she knew nothing therefore of her son's new attachment, until her return to London, about a week afterwards, when Lord Ellincourt called at her ladyship's house in Hill-Street, and broke the ice in the following manner:—

"I have something to ask you, my dear mother, that I hardly know how to begin about, for fear you should disapprove of it." "What is it, Edmund?" said Lady Ellincourt, with a smile that might have encouraged even a more timid petitioner, "you know I am not *very inaccessible*."

"I know it well," replied his lordship, "and therefore I don't like to intrude upon your goodness, but my heart is set upon your compliance." "Is it money, Edmund?" "No, upon my honour, but I will not give you the trouble of guessing, my dear mother. I have taken a fancy to a sweet girl, and I want your countenance for her." "Edmund," said Lady Ellincourt, looking very grave, "I hope you are not forming an attachment I am likely to disapprove of; marriages against the consent of parents are seldom productive of happiness, and I have the most decided objection to them from a knowledge of their fatal tendency. My own family will furnish you with an instance of the most melancholy kind, that could not fail of impressing your mind with a salutary fear of falling into the same error, were I to take the trouble of relating the sad tale, but I know you have a great dislike to long stories, so I shall not trouble you with it unless you render it necessary, by your imprudence." "You give excellent advice, my dear mother," replied Lord Ellincourt, "but my attachment is not of the kind you suppose it to be. The girl I have taken

a fancy to, is quite a child; she is destitute of friends, and I am determined to defray the expenses of her education; the favour I want you to grant me, is, your countenance for the sweet little creature, which when you have seen, you will admire as much as I do." Lord Ellincourt then related the trick Sir Henry Ambersley had played him, about the advertisement, and the visit in consequence of it to Miss Bridewell's Temple of Instruction." Lady Ellincourt laughed; "are you sure, Edmund," said she, "that this is the *truth*, and *nothing but the truth?*" "*Upon honour*," replied his lordship, "when you have seen her you will not doubt it: let me drive you there to-day, my dear mother." "Not to-day, Edmund, replied her ladyship, but I will accompany you tomorrow."

The next day Lady Ellincourt kept her appointment, and her son, accompanied by Col. Ross, drove her down to Myrtle Grove. Lady Ellincourt had been in the habit of visiting the ladies Trentham, and was therefore personally known to Miss Bridewell, who, being a devout worshipper of high rank, was delighted when her noble visitor was announced. Lady Isabella and Lady Maria were called to see their aunt, and at their entrance Lord Ellincourt demanded his dear little Fanny. Miss Bridewell, with a significant nod, said, "I waited for your lordship's command:" and ringing the bell, ordered the servant to fetch Miss Fanny. The sweet child soon obeyed the summons, and regardless of the presence of Lady Ellincourt and Col. Ross, ran with open arms to embrace her benefactor, whose delight at this testimony of her gratitude and affection made him ready to devour her with kisses. As soon as the loving pair could separate from each other, Lady Ellincourt took Fanny by the hand, and examining her countenance, excl med, "What a sweet

LADY ELLINCOURT.

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creature! What is her name, Edmund?" "*Fatherless Fanny*," replied Lord Ellincourt, "she has no other." "I am not to be called *Fatherless Fanny* any more," said the child, "for Lord Ellincourt will be my papa." Col. Ross smiled, and looked significant, and Lady Ellincourt pressed the sweet girl to her bosom. A suspicion she could not repress, made her ladyship incline towards the Colonel's and Miss Bridewell's opinion, although a moderate calculation of their respective ages would have proved beyond a doubt the fallacy of such an idea, as that Fanny could be Lord Ellincourt's daughter. The playful innocence of the engaging Fanny, won completely upon the heart of Lady Ellincourt, who became as warm an advocate for the scheme of adoption as her son, and added her charges to his, in desiring Miss Bridewell to attend to the education of the lovely orphan, who rose proportionably in the good graces of her governess, as she appeared to be esteemed by the great people that lady so constantly bowed to. Lady Maria Trentham, who rejoiced in Fanny's good fortune, received her cousin with more than usual cordiality, and Lord Ellincourt, who had been informed by Fanny of er ladyship's kindness to his favourite, thought ne had never seen the amiable Maria look so bewitching.

When Lady Ellincourt found, by her watch, that she had staid to the utmost limits of her time, she gave the signal for departure; and Lord Ellincourt putting a little parcel into Fanny's hand, which he told her contained a keep-sake, kissed her for farewell, and the whole party separated.

During the drive home, Col. Ross repeated his conjectures, respecting Fanny's affinity to her benefactor, adding, with a laugh, "that he could not have supposed his lord capable of so much art as he had that day displayed; why you have

done the old lady completely," said he. "If you mean that I have *imposed* upon my mother," said Lord Ellincourt, "you are mistaken, for I am sure I did not know there was such a being in existence as my little Fanny, until Ambersley sent me on a fool's errand in search of her namesake." "If that be really the case," said Col. Ross, "I can guess what are your views with this girl. She is a pretty creature, and will make an agreeable variation in your *amours passages* bye-and-bye." "I may have been dissipated and unthinking," replied Lord Ellincourt, reddening with resentment at the vile suggestion, "but I hope I am incapable of *deliberate villainy*, such as you insinuate. The precaution I have taken of giving my mother's sanction to my whim ought to teach you better."

"You astonish me!" interrupted Col. Ross "is it possible that you have no other view but benevolence in this munificent action?" "None, upon my honour, excepting, indeed, the pleasure of contributing to the happiness of a being I love, in a manner, wholly unaccountable, even to myself," said Lord Ellincourt.

"Then I must compliment your lordship's *philanthropy*," rejoined the Colonel, sarcastically, "and I hope you will let me participate in the happiness resulting from such heroism, by permitting me sometimes to visit your beautiful *protegee* in your company?"

"No, by heavens," replied Lord Ellincourt, "the man who could suspect another of such baseness, as the deliberate perversion of innocence, is unfit to be trusted where he could prove himself capable of the same turpitude, to the detriment of a defenceless female." "Moralizing too," said Col. Ross, "by all that's pretty! Upon my honour I rejoice in your lordship's conversion, and

cannot enough admire the superlatively charming cause of such a wonderful reformation."

Here the conversation ended, and the remainder of the drive passed in silence on both sides. Lord Ellincourt was piqued, and Col. Ross was digesting a scheme which had presented itself to his fancy, whilst conversing on the subject of the gentle Fanny; the accomplishment of which, promised to gratify two of his predominant passions; namely—sensuality and revenge. Lord Ellincourt had offended his pride, by censuring his sentiments, and he wished for an opportunity of being even with him; to deprive his lordship, at some future period, of the object of his generous affection, offered a fair prospect to the diabolical Colonel, of revenging the supposed injury, and at the same time obtaining a beautiful creature to administer to his unlawful pleasures, and finally become the victim of them.

It was certainly a long while to look forward to, but Col. Ross was one of those epicures in sensuality who could deliberately plan, and unrelentingly execute, the most atrocious acts of cruelty, if they promised the slightest gratification to his depraved appetite. His wickedness was systematic and he had as much pleasure in planning as in executing the designs he conceived.

But we will leave him to his cogitations, and proceed with our narrative. The happy Fanny, as soon as her new friends had departed, opened the parcel Lord Ellincourt left with her, and found, to her great delight, an elegant gold chain for her neck, with a small watch suspended, and a pair of bracelets to correspond. It will be easily conceived how such a present must win upon the heart of a girl like Fanny. She jumped about in raptures, and displayed her "*Papa's* present," as she styled Lord Ellincourt, to every creature that came near her, and the novelty of possessing

such a treasure kept her awake a good part of the night.

However she soon became accustomed to the possession of trinkets, for Lord Ellincourt never was so happy as when bestowing marks of his generosity upon his favourite. Anxious to purchase good treatment for her, his lordship took care to remember Miss Bridewell with a munificence that completely won that lady's heart. The improvement of *Fatherless Fanny* seemed now of more real consequence than that of any lady in the house, and Mrs. Dawson and the subordinate teachers were continually reminded of Miss Bridewell's anxiety on the subject. It has already been said that Fanny possessed great natural abilities, her rapid progress may therefore be supposed, under such advantageous circumstances, and she soon became a brilliant proof of the skill so justly ascribed to the preceptress of Myrtle Grove *establishment*, in bestowing polite accomplishments upon the pupils under her care. But barren is that mind, whose improvement has been confined to the study of mere ornamental acquirements; the musician, the dancer, or the paintress, however skilful in the various branches, will make but a poor wife, if she be deficient in the more solid and valuable qualities of good sense, good temper, and, above all, religion and virtue.

The softest melody cannot soothe the ear of pain, nor can the anxious eye of sorrow dwell with delight upon the graceful attitude, or highly finished picture. The knowledge of languages, though carried to the highest pitch of perfection, can suggest no comfort for affliction, nor strengthen the suffering mind to bear the reverse of fortune with fortitude and resignation. Such knowledge, therefore, may be pronounced in the words of Solomon—"Vanity of vanities," unless she who possesses it has first sought religion in the page

of truth, and having found the divine precept, made that the basis on which the superstructure of the refinement was reared. The accomplishments and graces which adorn virtue, may be entitled to admiration. The skill of the lapidary may call forth the brilliatncy ofhe diamond, but cannot give the same lustre to the pebble.

All the pains bestowed upon Fanny's education by Miss Bridewell and her assistants, would have availed little, had not the good precepts instilled into her heart by the amiable Emily Barlowe, given solidity to her principles. Piety is a natural feeling of the youthful heart, and only requires some skilful hand to call forth its latent energies, and give them their proper bias. Emily Barlowe had been instructed by her father in the principles of religion; and her youthful heart glowed with the fervour of genuine piety. With what rapture did the amiable instructress awaken, in the docile mind of her beloved Fanny, the first conceptions of the Deity, and teach her guileless lips to pronounce the first word of praise and gratitude. Then judiciously turning the mind of her pupil from the adoration of the *Creator* to the contemplation of the *creature*. Pity for the various ills inseparable from human nature, soon gave birth to charity, and the mercy she asked of God for herself, she felt ready to bestow upon her fellow mortals; not only in gifts of benevolence, but in acts of forbearance and good will. Thus Fanny, in imitation of the example Emily set before her eyes, became good-natured, patient, and forgiving, from principle, and benevolent from the irresistible feelings of her heart—

"Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclin'd.'

The superiority in virtue over the generality of her sex to which Fanny afterwards attained,

might justly be said to owe its perfection to the early instructions of the amiable Emily, who, like a guardian angel watched the infancy of her favourite, and took the advantage of that critical season when the human mind is fittest to receive the impression of piety, and which, like the seed time in agriculture, if once neglected cannot be retrieved. And whilst she was anxiously inculcating the principles of religion and virtue, she took especial care to eradicate every tendency to vanity or arrogance, from which, even the best dispositions are not wholly exempt.

Lord Ellincourt's presents were but too well calculated to engender pride, and the praises he always lavished upon Fanny's person every time he saw her, would inevitably have rendered her vain, had not the watchful Emily repressed the rising emotions, and by expatiating upon the precarious tenure of personal charms, exposed as they are to the ravages of sickness, and certain decay of old age; and explaining the still more uncertain duration of human attachments, she awakened in the mind of her youthful auditor reflections that would have done honour to a girl double her number of years.

The effect Lord Ellincourt's attachment to Fanny had upon his mind, was of the most salutary kind. With the genuine spirit of paternal affection, he was frequently calculating his expenses, and projecting curtailments of their extent, in order to purchase some advantage or pleasure for his darling, and to the astonishment of all the gentlemen of the turf, his lordship's stud at Newmarket was sold off, and the destructive amusement of horse-racing abandoned within a year after he took the whim of adopting Fanny, because he had made a determination to retrench, in order to have it in his power to make a settlement upon his favourite which resolution it was

impossible to put in practise whilst he kept up such an extensive establishment, and incurred such heavy losses as generally attended his gambling ventures.

Lady Ellincourt, who felt greatly pleased with the appearance of her son's reformation, gave every encouragement to his patronage of the little orphan, and even indulged him so far as to invite Fanny to spend a month with her during the summer's vacation, at her country seat, which lay in Yorkshire, on an estate that had been lately purchased for her, by her agent, and was celebrated for the antique grandeur of the house, and the beauty of the surrounding parks and grounds.

To this delightful retreat the happy Fanny was conveyed in Lady Ellincourt's coach, and no sooner had she entered the great hall, than she exclaimed in ectasy, "Oh! this is mamma Sydney's house, do let me see her?" and running forward, she made to a door opposite to her, and attempted to open it. The lock resisted her efforts. "Pray opon it for me?" said the child, turning to a servant, "mamma Sydney is in there! and I want to see her!" Lord Ellincourt, who had arrived a few hours before his mother, now came into the hall. "What is the matter with my Fanny?" said his lordship, "what is the little girl doing there?" "I want to see mamma Sydney," replied Fanny, "and I know she is in that room: she always used to sit there."

"Were you ever in this house before my love?" asked his lordship, astonishment painted on his countenance. "Oh! yes, papa, I used to live here, and this door you will not open for me, is mamma Sydney'sparlour.

Lord Ellincourt ordered a servant to inquire for the key of the room, and turning to Fanny, he siad "your mamma Sydney cannot be in that room for you see it is 'ocked." Fanny stood in

the utmost agitation whilst the key was fetched but appeared too much struck to speak a word. In the mean time Lady Ellincourt, who had been speaking to her steward relative to some alterations that had been lately made, came up to see what had arrested the attention of her son and Fanny.

When she was informed of the child's assertion respecting the house,—"Some resemblance, I suppose," said her ladyship, "between this and the house where she formerly resided; but this could not be her mamma Sydney's house, because the estate belonged to a Mr. Hamilton, who had resided abroad some years before his death, and I purchased it of his heir. The place had not been inhabited from the time Mr. Hamilton went abroad, as its dilapidated condition plainly proved at the time I took possession of it, about two years ago."

At this moment the servant brought the key, and the door was opened; Fanny ran into the room, but presently returned with a sorrowful countenance;—"Mamma Sydney is not there," said she, her eyes full of tears, "I wonder where she is gone." "Are you sure this is the room where your mamma Sydney used to sit?" asked Lady Ellincourt. "Oh, yes, ma'am," replied Fanny, "see, here is her work-table!" and the child going up to the fire-place, raised a bracelet that seemed made for the convenience of holding a candlestick or book, for any body who chose to sit close to the fire. "Mamma Sydney used to put her work-bag upon this, when she was working, and when she was doing nothing, her snuff-box used to stand upon," said Fanny, "and sometimes a book; and when she had done reading, she would put her spectacles into the middle of the book, and lay it down, and say to me, 'Come, *puss*, *you* must divert me *now*'"

Both Lord and Lady Ellincourt were very much struck with an account so distinctly given of an event so remote, and her ladyship said she would inquire the particulars relative to the former inhabitants of her mansion, and endeavour to elucidate the mystery.

Fanny was now led about the spacious rooms and long galleries that distinguished the noble dwelling, by her beloved "*papa*," and every now and then expressed her delight at the discovery of some old acquaintance, either in the rooms or their furniture, and her recollection of trivial circumstances was so clear, that notwithstanding the evidence that appeared to contradict the probability of Fanny's having been formerly an inmate of Pemberton Abbey, neither Lord Ellincourt nor his mother could divert their minds from the belief that her account was correct.

Every inquiry was made amongst the tenantry, likely to elucidate the mystery, but to little purpose; their answers corresponded uniformly when compared together:—no Lady of the name of Sydney had resided in that house, nor did they believe that Pemberton Abbey had been inhabited by any body besides the servants, who had been left in care of it, since the departure of Mr. Hamilton, until it was purchased by Lady Ellincourt.

This was told Fanny; but she still persisted in her assertion, nor could any argument, for a moment, shake her opinion. Of her removal from Pemberton Abbey she could give but a very imperfect account; she remembered having been in a carriage a long time, but whither she was carried, or by whom, she could not tell; all she knew perfectly was, that her mamma Sydney did not go with her, and that the lady with whom she staid for some days before she was left at Miss Bridewell's, was very cross with her

A wide field was here opened for conjecture,

and Lord and Lady Ellincourt were left to wander in it, as all their efforts to obtain any light upon the subject failed of effect. A circumstance which occurred just before Fanny's return to school, served to increase the perplexity of their minds, and to raise their curiosity to a pitch of impatience, very ill-suited to the suspense they were obliged to endure.

The apartment little Fanny slept in, was in the same gallery as Lady Ellincourt's, and divided from that room by a small chamber, which was occupied by her ladyship's woman; the screams of poor Fanny, one night, awakened Lady Ellincourt from a sound sleep, and starting from her bed the amiable lady threw on her dressing gown, and ran to the assistance of her favourite. Mrs. Parsons, her maid, was there before her, and was supporting the terrified child in her arms.

"What is the matter?" exclaimed Lady Ellincourt, "my dear Fanny, what is the matter?" "Mamma Sydney has been here; she came and looked at me, and when I spoke to her, she ran away and would not answer." "You have been dreaming, my love," said Lady Ellincourt.—"No, indeed, Ma'am, I was wide awake," replied the child, "I heard her open my door, and saw her come up to the bed, with a candle in her hand, and she looked so angry when I spoke to her, that she frightened me out of my wits. Pray, dear Lady Ellincourt, call her back, and beg her not to be angry with me." "My dear child," answered her ladyship, "this is mere fancy, I assure you. Nobody *could* come into your room without being heard by Parsons." "I heard nothing, I assure your ladyship," said Mrs. Parsons, "until Miss Fanny screamed out, and I was not asleep, for I had been indulging myself with a book."

It was with great difficulty that Lady Ellincourt

succeeded in pacifying the terrified Fanny, who lay trembling, and in the greatest agitation. "The poor child has been frightened through a dream," said the compassionate Lady, "so take her into my bed, Parsons, she shall not be left alone again to-night, or her nerves may suffer severely." Mrs. Parsons obeyed her lady's commands, and Fanny was so delighted at being permitted to sleep with her dear benefactress, that she forgot her terror, and her tears, and gave way to such emotions of joy, that Lady Ellincourt was sensibly affected, by a proof of attachment so unquestionably exquisite.

The next day, however, Fanny persisted in her assertion, that she had really seen her Mamma Sydney; nor could all Lady Ellincourt's dissertations on the strength of the imagination, during the influence of dreams, avail any thing; the child still insisted that she was wide awake when the figure of Mamma Sydney had appeared before her, and that the noise of some door opening had awakened her. "It seemed," said she, "as if a door had been forced open, that had been long shut, for it made a bursting noise," "There is only the door that leads from Parson's door to your's," replied Lady Ellincourt, "and that you know stood open; you must therefore have been mistaken, my dear Fanny." Fanny shook her wise head: "I cannot tell *how* it could be," said she, "but I am sure it *was* as I say."

The room in which Fanny slept was pannelled with cedar wood, which was carved in the most curious manner, and had no doubt been esteemed a *chef-d' œuvre* of workmanship, at the time the house was built. The child's obstinacy respecting the person she had seen, impressed Lady Ellincourt's mind so strongly, that she sent for a carpenter to examine the wainscoat, with the most scrupulous exactness, in order to ascertain whe-

ther there was any secret entrance to the apartment.

The scrutiny, however, produced nothing to elucidate the mystery; the man declared the partitions perfectly sound; and asserted that it was an utter impossibility that they should conceal any way of entering the room impervious to his minute investigation. This satisfied Lady Ellincourt; and she returned to her first opinion—i. e. That Fanny had been misled by a dream; and the circumstance was soon forgotten by the child, as no recurrence of the same terror could happen, as her joy at sleeping with Lady Ellincourt, had endeared her so much to that lady, that she was permitted to remain the partner of her bed during her stay at Pemberton Abbey, from whence she was conveyed to school, at the expiration of the vacation.

The Christmas following the Miss Barlowe's left Miss Bridewell's, and poor Fanny lost her best friend in her beloved Emily; her sorrow was somewhat assuaged, however, by an unexpected event. Mr. and Mrs. Barlowe had come to England to fetch their daughters, and the health of the latter was so delicate, that it was judged necessary to her recovery to breathe her native air for some time; she determined therefore to stay a year in England, and thus Emily Barlowe had frequent opportunities of visiting her dear Fanny, as Mr. Barlowe entered into his daughter's feelings respecting the child, with all the warmth of benevolence natural to his disposition. The high patronage the little orphan now enjoyed, rendered all pecuniary aid unnecessary; but Mr. Barlowe knew enough of the world to believe that, notwithstanding *present* appearances, there might come a day when poor Fanny would find that friendship is no *inheritance*.

"If Lord Ellincourt should neglect to make

any settlement upon his adopted child," said the good gentleman, "life is a precarious tenure, and how soon may the sweet girl be exposed to the frowns of a cruel world, or indeed, what is still worse, to the various snares which are constantly spread for indigent beauty, by the remorseless panders of opulent depravity."

"Surely," replied Emily, to whom this speech was addressed, "surely papa, Lord Ellincourt will not be so cruel as to leave the dear child unprovided for; his lordship seems so very fond of her that I should think such a thing impossible."

"Lord Ellincourt is a very young man," answered Mr. Barlowe, "and besides that, a very thoughtless one. I don't believe, by what I hear of him, that he ever did a good thing in his life, before he patronised Fanny. Such men as he think little about death, although there is certainly no situation which is more exposed to mortality, than that of a true votary of fashion, since, should their necks escape the perils of *charioteering*—their health, the intemperate excesses of midnight revels—their lives lie at the mercy of every reprobate with whom they associate; for should he choose to call them out for any frivolous offence, whether fancied or real, the imperious laws of honour forbid them to decline the combat: yes, such is the inverted order of things, that he who has dared to blaspheme his God in his common conversation, who has infringed the sacred rights of humanity, upon the slightest temptation, and who has trampled, in their turn, every law, human and divine, as they opposed the gratification of his inordinate passions; such a man, I say, will tremble to act in opposition to the self-created law of the *Moloch* of these days, at whose shrine modern idolaters still sacrifice their children without remorse or contrition."

If Mr. Barlowe had merely reasoned upon the

subject of Fanny's precarious situation, little merit could have been arrogated for such a negative proof of his regard for her, but that worthy gentleman had not so much of the Pharisee in his composition; he never discussed any subject, either moral or divine, without acting up to the principles he professed, and in this instance he went even farther than common bounds of benevolence, for he provided for a contingency which appeared perfectly imaginary to every eye but his own.

Before Mr. Barlowe left England, he vested five hundred pounds in the funds, in the name of Fanny, and appointed a trustee to apply it to her use, in case any thing should happen to render such an assistance necessary. As Fanny had no surname, Mr. Barlowe had described her actual residence at the time of the donation, and other circumstances proper to identify her, with a precision that proved his anxiety for her welfare, and his own kind heart, beyond the possibility of a doubt. The friend to whom the trust was confided, was charged too, to give immediate notice, by letter, to Mr. Barlowe, should any accident happen to place Fanny in circumstances of necessity, as the generous gift was intended merely as a prelude to his further bounty, in case of such an event, as it had always been Mr. Barlowe's intention to indulge his daughter's wish of adopting the pretty orphan, if it could be done without prejudice to her favourite; and although Lord Ellincourt's bounty superseded that intention for the present, Mr. Barlowe still cherished the idea that the scheme might yet become both practicable and agreeable to all parties.

The amiable heart of the gentle Emily felt the most grateful impression of her father's kindness; yet, still she found it impossible to believe any thing that militated against the exalted opinion

she had formed of Lord Ellincourt's goodness. The benevolence his lordship had evinced for her favourite, in that trying moment, when her own heart was nearly broken at finding herself powerless in her cause, had first recommended him to her favour; the *agremens* of a handsome person and highly-finished manners had completed the conquest, and the gentle Emily had bestowed her affections beyond the power of recalling them, upon the unconscious Ellincourt, before she even suspected such a thing was possible.

A father's anxious eyes had penetrated the guarded secret of her bosom, by them he had seen his daughter twice in Lord Ellincourt's company, he had observed too, with equal precision, that his lordship's ideas had never wandered towards the love-sick Emily, and his prudence suggested an immediate separation. It was this conviction, too, that had induced him to dwell with such force upon the general depravity of *fashionable* men, in his conversation with his daughter, which has just been related, hoping that his just strictures upon the manners of the great, would tend to weaken her partiality for Lord Ellincourt. But, alas! when the poets' described love as a blind deity, they ought to have added that he was *deaf* also, and that his votaries were generally subject to the same infirmities.

Emily Barlowe had been accustomed to believe her father's opinions infallible, but on this occasion she either did not *hear* them, from the reason above mentioned, or they failed in their usual effect.

The year allotted for Emily Barlowe's stay in England soon glided away, and the mournful hour arrived that was to tear her from dear England—her tenderly-beloved Fanny—and from the contemplation of that admired countenance, whose smile never failed of imparting delight, and

whose frown gave the thrill of anguish to her heart.

Fanny was at lady Ellincourt's house, on a visit, at the time of the Barlowe's departure, and as Emily was a particular favourite with her ladyship, she was invited to spend the last week of her stay in London, under the same roof with her *favourite.* This was a dangerous indulgence to the tender girl, who had now an opportunity of more frequently meeting with *another favourite,* not so congenial to her happiness as the blooming Fanny. Lord Ellincourt had always thought Emily Barlowe a sweet girl, and felt grateful to her for her kindness to Fanny, but he was too much accustomed to the boldness of modern ladies, whose beauty demands rather than wins admiration, to be easily charmed by unobtrusive merit, and soft feminine loveliness, veiled by the shade of general modesty.

His lordship felt surprised, therefore, to find what a charming girl he had so long regarded with indifference, when a more social intercourse displayed those attractions to his notice, which had been hitherto concealed by the amiable diffidence of the lovely possessor. "Upon my honour," said his lordship, the morning after Emily's departure, "upon my honour, I should have been desperately in love with Emily Barlowe, if she had staid a little longer. Where did she hide all her powers of charming so long? Most young ladies are to be known now a-days, by conversing with them two or three times; at least all that is *agreeable* in them; but this lovely creature seems to rise in one's estimation every time one converses with her, and I have never examined her blushing countenance of late, without discovering some beauty unobserved before, yet which appeared too striking to be overlooked by any, but an insensible. Can you tell me, my dear mother, the reason of this late discovery?"

Lady Ellincourt smiled. "The reason, my dear Edmund, lies in your own breast, where a growing partiality has beautified its object, and discovered charms impervious to any other vision." "What do not *you* admire Emily then?" asked Lord Ellincourt. "I *do*, most sincerely," answered her ladyship, "but so I *always* did; I find no *new* beauties, she always appeared to me a lovely girl, both in mind and person." "I wish you had said before, that you thought her so," replied Lord Ellincourt, with a thoughtful look. Lady Ellincourt smiled: "I never wished to direct your choice, Edmund," said she, "but if it had fallen on Miss Emily Barlowe, I certainly should have started no objection; her fortune is large, and her family unexceptionable: but she is *gone*, and you must endeavour to forget her."

"That is impossible," replied his lordship, whose imagination had grown warm, in discussing the subject, "I can *never* forget the charming Emily, and I have a great mind to follow her to Jamaica." "Take a little time for consideration," said Lady Ellincourt, "the fit *may* go off, a lover's *eternity* is not of long duration—sometimes." "You treat the matter lightly, my dear mother," said Lord Ellincourt, "but depend upon it you will find I am serious; in the meantime, I am glad to find this alliance does not come within the censure of ill-assorted matches, which I remember you once seriously warned me against—apropos, you said there was a melancholy instance in our family, of the folly of such marriages; I wish you would tell me the *long story*, as you styled it, I feel an inclination for such an indulgence; will you grant it me?" "With pleasure, my dear Edmund," replied Lady Ellincourt, "when we have time to get to the end of it, which is not the case now. This evening, however, I shall be at your service. Fanny is to return to Myrtle Grove this morning,

her young companions will console her better than I can, for the loss she has sustained, or at least make her forget her sorrow, for that is the only remedy at her age." Lord Ellincourt said he would accompany his mother in her morning drive, and assist in taking their mutual favourite to school."

Fanny was now in her eleventh year, and beautiful as an angel. There was such an expression of innocence and sweetness in her countenance, that it was impossible not to love her; and although the tints of the rose, the lily, the violet, and the carnation, combined to render her complexion lovely, it was the emanation of her heavenly mind that gave that brilliancy to her countenance, which rendered it truly dazzling. Lord Ellincourt contemplated his lovely ward, as he sat opposite to her in his mother's barouche, and he was more than ever struck with her exquisite beauty. That sweet girl, thought he, must be protected with unceasing vigilance, or she will fall a sacrifice to some of the wretches, her uncommon loveliness will not fail to attract around her. But, although Lord Ellincourt felt the necessity of protecting Fanny, he neglected the surest method of doing so, and thereby verified Mr. Barlowe's opinion of him, that he was a *thoughtless* as well as a *young* man.

We will now, however, set down Fanny at Miss Bridewell's, and jumping over a few hours, or *killing* them by any *fashionable* device, bring our readers to Lady Ellincourt's fire-side; where her ladyship on one side, and her son on the other they may listen to our next chapter, which contains a long story.

CHAPTER IV.

A Long Story.

"My father," said LadyEllincourt, "was, you know, the Marquis of Petersfield, but at the time of his coming of age, there was very little probability of his ever attaining to that dignity, as he was only a very distant branch of the Trentham family, and no less than *thirteen* living claimants, besides the chance of their having children, stood between him and the title; yet such is the mutability of all human tenures, that notwithstanding these opposing obstacles, my father became Marquis of Petersfield by the time he was eight-and-thirty. He was then a widower, with two children—my dear lamented brother and myself, happy would it have been for us had he never been induced to re-enter the pale of wedlock! My father had doated on my mother, and he transferred his affections to her children, when she was borne from him by a premature death. Never was a fonder parent, a more indulgent friend, than he always approved himself to us, whilst we were so happy as to share his love between us.

"My brother was nearly three years older than I was, and the most perfect friendship existed between us from the first dawn of reason. My beloved Seymour was of so sweet a disposition that he made it his study to render me happy, and the little superiority he had over me, in point of age, rendered him at once my instructor and playmate. At the time of my father's second marriage, I had just attained my fourteenth year, and Seymour was seventeen.

"The lady selected for our mother-in-law, was every way my father's inferior, both as to rank and fortune; being merely the daughter of a subaltern officer, who had been educated as half-boarder at a school of repute, and from thence attained to the employment of governess to two over-grown girls of fashion, whose ill-judging mother had engaged Miss Henderson to relieve her from the irksome task of *entertaining* her daughters, for *instruction* had been long out of the question with the pupils committed to her care. The eldest, Miss Howard, was seventeen at the time Miss Henderson entered Lady Howard's family, and the youngest considerably turned of fifteen.

"The girls were co-heiresses, and perfectly aware of their approaching independence—their fortunes were to be at their own disposal the very day of their coming of age.

"Miss Henderson was artful enough to consu her own interest, rather than the improvement of her pupils; she accordingly indulged their most capricious fancies, and entered into their most unreasonable projects with a degree of patient perseverance, that succeeded in rendering her indispensible to their happiness. This was just what Miss Henderson had intended, and she exulted in the success of her schemes. Instead of being dismissed when her pupils were presented, as is usual with governesses in general, Miss Henderson was retained as their companion, with an increased salary, that she might be enabled to visit with them, in a style of elegance suitable to the appearance of the ladies she accompanied. This much wished-for intercourse with the fashionable world, introduced Miss Henderson to my father, and her ambition was fired with the hopes of obtaining his notice as a lover, which hopes were afterwards but too fatally realized, for the welfare

of my unfortunate brother and myself. Miss Henderson was the epitome of every thing that is hateful in woman; artful, designing, and insatiably ambitious.

"In the subordinate station she had hitherto filled, it had been necessary for her to display the most unvarying complaisance. She had appeared, therefore, to my father's infatuated fancy a gentle timid creature, whose diffidence and unassuming modesty veiled half the perfections of her mind; and he exulted in the thought of bestowing upon his children a mother-in-law, who would be as solicitous for their welfare as he was himself. Unhappy delusion! which cost him but too dear! No sooner was Miss Henderson raised to the rank of Marchioness of Petersfield, than all her complaisance, her humility, and her gentleness, vanished like the fading meteor.

"The most haughty airs, the most intolerable caprice, were instantly displayed by the new-made peeress, and *felt* by every unfortunate creature who came within the circle of her power. To my brother she took the most inveterate dislike, from the first week of her marriage; and ***Lord Durham's*** extravagance, and ***Lord Durham's*** idleness, the unformed rudeness of his manners, soon became the unfailing theme of her invective. Whilst he was at home the poor youth never enjoyed a moment's respite from her malice; and when he returned to college, his bills were censured, his allowance curtailed, and every vexatious torture inflicted upon him, which cruelty could invent, or ingenuity devise. To me she was more indulgent, for she felt not the same jealousy of ***my*** existence, which disturbed her with regard to my brother.

"She was ambitious of becoming the MOTHER, as well as the ***wife***, of a Marquis; and the birth of a son a year after her marriage, rendered her more formidably malicious to Lord Durham, than

she had ever been before. At the age of nineteen my dear brother was sent abroad, to give that necessary finish to polite education, which used to be acquired by visiting the different courts of Europe, but which has been impracticable ever since French anarchy has convulsed every European state with war and faction. The evening before his departure, the amiable youth was in my dressing room, passing the last few hours of his stay in the parental mansion, with the only person who appeared to lament his departure. My father's affection had long been weaned from him by the artifices of his cruel mother-in-law.

" 'My dear Catherine,' said Lord Durham, pressing my hand as he spoke, 'I am, at this moment, labouring under an affliction of which your gentle breast has no idea. The pangs I feel at parting from my sweet sister are severe indeed; but what will she say when I assure her that there exists *another dear one*, from whom I cannot tear myself without feelings of agony, nothing inferior to those which part the soul and body.' 'Good heavens!' exclaimed I, 'what means my dearest Seymour?' 'I mean,' replied the sweet youth, 'that I have undone myself by my imprudence, and that I have involved the most amiable of her sex in my ruin—I am married!' 'Married?' repeated I, 'and to whom?' 'To an angel,' rejoined he, wringing his hands in agony, 'Oh! Caroline, your heart wil bleed for her, when you know her.' 'Have you never hinted your situation to my father?' inquired I, trembling as I spoke, for I perceived such a wildness in my brother's looks that it alarmed me beyond expression. 'I never touched upon the subject but once,' answered he, 'and then I was silenced in a manner too decisive to admit of my again renewing it.'

"'But who is the lady?' said I, 'you forget my anxiety, for I am sure you would not trifle

with it.' 'You know Lady Emily Hinchinbroke?' 'I do,' replied I, 'but surely it is not her, the daughter of my father's deadly foe, the man who would have deprived him of life?' 'It is, it is,' exclaimed Seymour, in an agony of grief, 'ah! why did I ever behold her face? Why was I ever taught the inestimable value of an affection that has undone me? But I will no longer keep you in suspense; the mournful story is a short one:—

"'I became acquainted with the fascinating Emily whilst on a visit to Lord Riversdale, her maternal uncle, whose son has always been my most intimate friend at college; the attachment was mutual, and I really believe its violence was increased by the certainty that it never could be approved by our parents. A secret correspondence has been carried on these two years between us, and at length, in a fit of desperation, it was determined that we should be asked in church, and married, as we were both under age, and could not be united by any other means. This plan was the suggestion of sir Henry Poulet, Lord Riversdale's son, who has been our confidant from the beginning of our attachment. In a fatal hour we both acceded to it. Emily was on a visit at Lord Riversdale's, in Berkley Square, and as I visited there every day, with the freedom of a son, the unfortunate scheme was but too easily accomplished.

"'It is now about five months since we were united, and already have we deeply repented our imprudent rashness, and yet our repentance does not originate in decay of affection, far from it, our love is more tender, more ardent than ever; but alas! we see too plainly the fatal consequences of our impatience. My own sufferings would be nothing in my eyes, were it not for those entailed upon my Emily. Oh! that any selfish gratification should have induced me to fill that heart with

sorrow, that beats only for me! The secret has hitherto been kept inviolable, and I believe unsuspected, but that security is at an end, for Lord Somertown has fixed upon a husband for his daughter, and she has received notice to prepare herself for the event. The rich Marquis of Alderney is his intended son-in-law. Emily intreats me to leave her to the development of our unhappy secret, and assures me that she considers it a fortunate circumstance that I am about to leave England, as she thinks her father's anger will cool sooner when he feels the impossibility of wreaking it upon me; but these arguments have little weight with a heart so anxious as mine, and I would rather brave his utmost fury than leave my angel Emily, to encounter the slightest share of his resentment. I have done every thing in my power to delay my journey, but nothing can avail me to protract my departure any longer, unless I make a premature discovery, which must inevitably prove fatal to us both. I am constrained, therefore, to abandon her my soul holds deares upon earth, at the moment she stands most in need of my support.

" ' All our hopes rest upon some accidental rupture of the marriage treaty, between Lord Somertown and the Marquis of Alderney. If Emily could but remain unmolested until I am of age, every thing would be well. Henry Poulet has promised to give me notice, should any violent step be taken with my Emily, that I may fly to her succour; for what barriers could prevent me from returning, if her danger called for my protection? No impediment that seas, rocks, or mountains can present, could for an instant intimidate a mind absorbed as mine is, by one object, dearer than life itself.

"I listened to this recital of my brother's unfortunate story with an aching heart, too well ac-

quainted with the animosity that existed between Lady Emily's father and my own, to form the slightest hope of their ever being reconciled; my prophetic eye beheld in an instant the phial of vengeance poured upon their devoted heads. Lady Petersfield I knew would aggravate every thing likely to render my brother obnoxious to my father's anger, and I too plainly foresaw that the unpropitious union would not be long a secret. Yet still I thought it better that my brother should not be within reach of Lord Somertown's vengeance, during the first emotions of fury that would follow the fatal discovery; I therefore urged his immediate departure; and, endeavouring to veil my own agonized feelings, I spoke the words of hope, whilst my heart trembled with terror; my faultering accents, however, but ill-accorded with the cheerfulness I wished to inspire. Seymour wrung my hand, whilst agony was painted on his countenance. 'It is in vain, my sister, that you attempt to console me—that pale cheek—that quivering lip—and tear-fraught eye, but too plainly tell me what you think of our situation. The die is cast, and our fate is irrevocable. To heaven I commend my Emily. Ah, surely innocence, such as her's, will not be forsaken! And yet why should I abandon her? No! I will stay, and brave the worst; I will this night confess my marriage to my father, and implore his protection for my adored wife; he will not, I am sure, be able to resist the eloquence of a love like mine.'

"'For heaven's sake,' interrupted I, 'think no more of such a mad scheme, replete with instant ruin. You talk of softening my father by your eloquence; but oh! tell me who shall be found sufficiently skilled in persuasion, to soothe the anger of Lord Somerown! You are both under age, the marriage can therefore be set aside, and you may depend upon it that would be the first

step her vindictive father would take, should you, by a premature discovery, put it into his power to do so. You are going abroad, when you return you will be of age. It will be easy to find an opportunity of rendering your marriage indissoluble by repeating the ceremony, and who knows what accidents may intervene during the period of your absence, that may render its renewal more propitious. Lord Sumertown is not immortal, and should he die, I am sure my father's animosity would die with him. He is too good a man to visit the sins of the father upon the innocent offspring.'

"'True, my dear sister,' replied Lord Durham, 'but instead of the fair prospect, you endeavour to place before my eyes, suppose my Emily's stern parent should insist upon her giving her hand to another; what will become of the timid girl unsupported as she will then be by the husband for whose sake she must brave the brutal fury of that most vindictive man?' 'Should any treaty of marriage be likely to be brought to a conclusion,' said I, 'it will then be time enough for you to return and acknowledge your marriage. I promise to take the first opportunity of getting an interview with Lady Emily; I visit a lady who is intimate with her, we will then lay a plan for carrying on a correspondence, and I promise to inform you of every movement which seems likely to threaten your beloved Emily with danger.' 'Kind beloved sister!' exclaimed my brother, pressing my hand, 'I will rely on your friendship, and be guided by your advice, and believe me it is no small consolation to me, in this hour of trial, to possess a confident so ready to sympathize in my sufferings.'

"Soon after this conversation my brother took his leave, and I passed the remainder of the night in tears and lament tions, without attempting to

undress myself or go to bed. At the peep of day I heard the carriage, that was to convey him away come to the door. I crept to my window, and saw him step into it, attended by his tutor, the door closed upon him, and the rattling of the wheels was soon lost in distance. I listened to the last faint sound, and throwing myself upon my bed I exclaimed 'he is gone! I shall see that beloved face no more.' My tears nearly suffocated me, and I sank upon my pillow in an agony of woe. Alas! my words were prophetic—I saw the noble youth no more! He was doomed to fall beneath the murderous steel of an assassin! But I must not anticipate the catastrophe.

"Lord Durham was no sooner gone, than our cruel mother-in-law set every engine to work to ruin him with his father. Through the medium of a discarded servant from Lord Somertown's, she learned the secret of my brother's attachment to Lady Emily—of the marriage, however, she knew nothing, nor do I believe a suspicion of such a circumstance ever crossed her imagination. This was, however, sufficient to exasperate my father, the bare idea of a connexion between his son and the daughter of his implacable enemy, filled him with fury, and so artfully did his unprincipled wife work upon his irritated feelings, that he took a solemn oath never to see his son again if he persisted in his choice of Lady Emily for a wife.

"This resolution was communicated to my unfortunate brother, in a letter from his incensed father, who imprecated the most dreadful maledictions upon his son's head, should he dare to act in disobedience to his commands.

"My Brother was at Nice when he received the fatal mandate, and he pursued his way to Italy, with a heart nearly broken with anguish and remorse. In the meantime I had fulfilled my promise of cultivating Lady Emily's friendship, and

I often had the satisfaction of observing that the sweet girl seemed to receive the most salutary consolation from our mutual confidence. We could not meet openly, but we enjoyed our friendly intercourses unsupected, at the house of a third person Poor Lady Emily's health began to decline rapidly: she became pale and thin, and the depression of her spirits seemed to increase daily; she was so urgent for me to pass as much timeas possible with her, that I often went imprudent lengths to gratify her, and the consequence was, that the implacable Lady Petersfield discovered our intimacy, by means of some of her spies; this was fresh food for her malice, and she did not fail to make use of it, to the destruction of the unhappy lovers.

"Lady Emily had shewn so much firmness in the refusal of the Marquis of Alderney's addresses, that her father, who did not in the least degree suspect her cause of it, yielded to her obstinacy, and dismissed the lover. What then was his fury when he was informed by a letter from Lady Petersfield, that there was a secret correspondence carried on between his daughter and Lord Durham. The letter was couched in terms of haughty defiance, and implied to have been written by my father's order: it contained a peremptory injunction to put a stop to the connexion, or to *tremble* for the consequences.

"No language could do justice to the rage that agitated the furious Earl, when he had read the fatal letter; he sent for Lady Emily into his presence, and so violent was the paroxysm of his anger, that he would certainly have made her its victim, by destroying her the instant she came before him, but for the timely interference of a servant, who came to her assistance, and forcibly dragged her from her enraged father, at the peril of his own life, and conveyed her out of her pa-

ternal mansion before Lord Somertown was aware of his intention. The sweet girl lay concealed in an obscure lodging for several days, and the servant having disappeared also, the voice of scandal soon spread the report that Lord Somertown's daughter had ran off with her father's footman.

"Lady Petersfield took care to have several paragraphs respecting this pretended elopement inserted in different papers, and collecting the various reports together, she made a packet of them and sent them with Lord Durham's letters to Florence. A letter from me, however, went by the same mail, which informed my brother of Lord Somertown's ill-treatment of Lady Emily, and her fortunate escape from his tyranny. I assured him his beloved Emily was in safe hands, and had determined to return no more to her father, as she found herself in a fair way of becoming a mother, and therefore knew too well the fatal consequences of such a circumstance being known to her father, to risk so dangerous a step. I endeavoured to inspire my brother with a degree of confidence I did not feel myself, but my letter produced the contrary effect, for it made him take the rash resolution of returning immediately to England.

"His tortured mind beheld his beloved wife exposed to every danger, both from relations and strangers. Oppressed by her father, traduced by the world, and defenceless amidst a host of enemies. The picture was too horrible to dwell upon, and without giving me any notice of his intention, the unfortunate youth set out on his retrogade journey. In the mean time every effort was made by Lord Somertown to discover the retreat of his daughter, but without success; she still eluded his vigilance, and was so fortunate as to reach the house of a generous friend, who had determined

to run all risks for her sake, without any suspicion being awakened among the numerous spies who were upon the watch to detect her movements; as soon as I was informed of this lucky circumstance, I wrote the pleasing news to my brother, little imagining that he was on his way to England, regardless of danger and impatient of delay.

"At this time my father removed his family to the country for the summer, and I was under the necessity of accompanying him; this was a cruel trial to me, as I found it very difficult to obtain any intelligence of Emily, as it was impossible to write to her by direct means, and the tedious methods I was forced to adopt, rendered my suspense and anxiety intolerable. At length the agreeable news reached me that she had given birth to a daughter, and was in a fair way to do well.

"How did I exult at that moment in the pleasing reflection that the sweet infant had escaped the fury of Lord Somertown, from whose vindictive rage I felt the most dreadful apprehensions. Alas! I had but little time for exultation, as a very few days only elapsed before the deepest sorrow overwhelmed me, in the premature death of the most amiable of brothers. Lord Durham had pursued his journey to England with such unremitting diligence that he arrived in London before I thought it probable he had received my letter.

"Dissappointed at not finding me in town, he wrote to me in haste to inquire the retreat of his beloved Emily. This letter, by one of those unlucky chances that too frequently occur in clandestine proceedings, fell into the hands of our implacable mother-in-law.

"Lord Durham's hand-writing was well known to her, and as the London post-mark struck her eye, her fertile imagination presented the possibility of

my brother's return to England, on Lady Emily's account. Lady Petersfield had no idea that the unhappy pair were already united, but supposed that Lord Durham had been brought back by Emily's entreaties, that the union might be cemented. There was nothing Lady Petersfield dreaded more than my brother's marrying, and she naturally concluded, as he was so much attached to Lady Emily, if she could but prevent the marriage, there would be little danger of his making another choice. Full of these ideas, therefore, the cruel woman carried my brother's letter to my father, without breaking the seal, and imparting her sentiments to him, upon the subject, left it to his own option whether he would read it or not. My father did not hesitate a moment, but tearing open the fatal letter, he soon became master of the carefully-concealed secret.

"Good Heavens! what a scene followed! I was sent for by my enraged parent, and loaded with every epithet anger could dictate or passion utter! In accents scarcely articulate from fury, he demanded the place of Lady Emily's retirement, and said he would not only disinherit, but instantly renounce me, if I refused to satisfy him on that head. His threats had, however, no other effect than that of determining me to keep the secret inviolable. 'Oh! my father,' said I, throwing myself on my knees before him, 'oh! my father, spare your unhappy daughter, and tempt her not to betray confiding friendship. I have solemnly sworn not to reveal to any one the retreat of my unhappy sister, and I cannot break the sacred vow, though you were even cruel enough to fulfil your dreadful threats, and crush me beneath the weight of your vengeance.'

"'Begone from my presence, serpent,' said my father, 'begone, or I shall curse thee! How soon does a girl, when she is made the confident of a

romantic love story, lose all sense of duty, all shame of acting rebellious to her parents. You talk of friendship with your father's bitter enemy, and would prefer wounding his heart, to the unpardonable crime of betraying this highly-prized friend. But call her not your sister, at your peril give her not that name. She is not—she cannot be that—no marriage can be good which is contracted by a minor, and I will take care your brother shall have no opportunity of renewing the contract. Begone to your apartment, girl, and in that retirement endeavour to recall to your perverted mind some sense of filial duty. I forbid you to leave your room until I withdraw the prohibition, and if you value your brother's happiness attempt not to write to him.'

"I obeyed my father's harsh mandate in silence, and retired slowly to my room, where I had the mortification of finding myself constantly attended, and closely watched by Lady Petersfield's confidential friend—a creature who seemed to bear an instructive hatred both to my brother and myself.

"In the mean time my father wrote to Lord Durham, and informed him that having come to a knowledge of his most unpardonable misconduct, in attaching himself to Lady Emily, he offered him his pardon, on one condition only, namely, to return immediately to the Continent, without attempting to see the object of his imprudent choice. 'All efforts to obtain an interview,' added my father, 'will prove ineffectual, and only serve to expose you to my just resentment, as Lady Emily is now in her father's house, where I hope she will recover a proper sense of her duty, and no longer endeavour to seduce you from yours.

"The receipt of this letter, instead of intimidating my brother, as it was intended to do, had a contrary effect, and determined him instantly to

declare his marriage to both families. and demand his wife. Full of this resolution, he wrote a letter to his father, acknowledging his fault in having taken a step of such importance, without his sanction, but at the same time declaring that it was his fixed resolve to abide by the consequences, be they what they might, and live only for his Emily. 'I am going,' added he, 'to demand her of her cruel father, for she shall no longer remain under his tyranny.'

"The letter concluded with the most affecting entreaty for pardon, and an appeal to Lord Petersfield's parental feelings in behalf of his unfortunate son. As soon as my brother had despatched this letter, he flew to Lord Somertown's, and requested an interview with his lordship. To his surprise he was immediately admitted. Lord Somertown received him with haughty coldness, but without any appearance of the violence he had expected. Encouraged by this, Lord Durham entered upon an immediate explanation of his marriage with Lady Emily, and in a mild but determined manner desired to be allowed to see her.

"'Who told you she was in my house?' asked Lord Somertown. 'My father,' replied Lord Durham. 'The information is worthy the informer,' rejoined the exasperated Earl, whose countenance now bore testimony to the rage that boiled within his bosom. 'I will tell you what, young man,' added he, in a voice scarcely articulate through stifled fury, 'I will tell you what, you have injured me beyond the reach of remedy, and I *will* have *vengeance*. Remember! I tell you so. As to my daughter, she is not, nor ever shall be, your wife; much sooner would I see her expire beneath the tortures of the rack, than acknowledge such an union. Your boasted marriage is null and void, for you are both under age; name it not again, for I will annul it.'

" ' My marriage is valid, and no power *can* annul it,' replied Lord Durham, ' we were married at our parish church, after having the banns published three times, in the same place, according to the form prescribed; and had you, my lord, attended public worship, as you ought to do, you would have had an opportunity of forbidding the banns, if the marriage did not meet with your approbation.'

" ' Vile traitor!' exclaimed Lord Somertown, ' begone from my presence:' and he rang the bell for the servants to turn my brother out, which they did by force, with the most insolent brutality.

" ' Remember,' cried Lord Somertown, as the men were dragging my brother out, ' remember I will annul the marriage, there are more ways than one of doing it. No Trentham shall unite with my family, and *live*.' When my brother returned home, he wrote a letter to me relating all that had passed at Lord Somertown's, and entreating me to inform him whither his Emily was, indeed, under her father's roof.

" My brother desired me to endeavour to soften his father in his favour, and to lend him what assistance I could, in finding his beloved wife. The writing of this letter was the last action that was known of the unfortunate youth's life. A note had been given him, whilst he was employed in it, and as soon as he had finished it, he took his hat, and went out. His servant waited up for him, until the dawn of day, and felt great alarm at his staying out, as it was very unusual with my brother to do so. When the porter got up, Lord Durham s valet went to bed, and having slept till nine o'clock, found his anxiety greatly increased, when he learned that his Lord had not yet returned.

" My father, on the receipt of my brother's letter, had set immediately off for London, and arrived there late the same night.

"The house was in the utmost confusion when he alighted from his carriage, as the bleeding body of my brother had just been found in Kensington Gardens, and recently owned by his affectionate valet, whose anxiety for his master's safety had led him all over the town in search of him. The report of a wounded gentleman being found in Kensington Gardens, soon reached his ears, and he flew to the spot whither Lord Durham had been conveyed by the person who found him, and where surgical aid had been administered in vain; for although my dear brother shewed signs of life for several hours after he was found, he never spoke, nor gave the least token of sensibility, and every glimmering of hope was fled, and the last faint struggle over, before poor Graham arrived, who instantly recognised his beloved master, when he looked upon his lifeless corpse, disfigured as it was by wounds and blood; and on searching his pockets narrowly, a note, which had escaped the notice of the first examiners, was found, which Lord Durham had received only a few minutes before he left his father's house, and which, no doubt, led him to the spot where he was murdered.

"The hand-writing was an imitation of Lady Emily's, and the words were merely these:—'Precisely at five o'clock this afternoon you will find a person at Kensington Garden gate, who will lead you to your faithful wife.—Emily.'

"A latent hope of reviving his dear lord, notwithstanding his lifeless appearance, and the opinion of the surgeon, had induced poor Graham to have my brother conveyed home, where every aid was immediately summoned, that anxiety and affection could suggest; but human help was of no avail, the vital spark had fled, and the inanimate body was incapable of receiving succour.

"The fatal sentence had just been pronounced

by the surgeons Graham's care had assembled, at the moment of my father's arrival. It is impossible to describe the agony of that distracted parent, when the fatal news was revealed to him. He had set out on his journey with sentiments of the most violent anger towards his son, and determined at all events to annul the marriage, which was the cause of his displeasure, little expecting to find it for ever set aside, by a catastrophe so fatal. The circumstances of my poor brother's being discovered were extraordinary. Two men, employed in the gardens, had heard the report of two pistols, whilst they were at the opposite side of the gardens, they both agreed that it was a duel, and made the best of their way towards the spot the sound appeared to come from.

"They were some time, however, before they found any thing to confirm eir suspicions. As it was a rainy day no person was walking, and when they had looked, in vain, for some traces of the supposed duellists, they were about to abandon their opinion, and return to their work, when one of them stumbled over something lying on the grass, and on stooping to examine what it was, found a pistol. This circumstance reviving their former suspicion, they made a diligent search, and soon afterwards discovered my unfortunate brother lying extended at the foot of a large tree, whose spreading branches had so darkened the spot, that the long grass concealed him, until the men were close to him. His hat was off, and lay at some distance from him, and a pistol, unloaded, lay close beside him. Some faint signs of life, that appeared on a close examination, induced the men to lift him from his cold bed, and convey him to the nearest public house, though a fear for their own safety had well-nigh deterred them from the charitable act, as the mysterious circumstances of his death rendered it but too probable that they

might be suspected of murdering him. Their humanity triumphed over their fears, and they acted the part of the good Samaritan. On their entrance in the public house, the men desired the landlord to examine the dear youth's pockets, when his purse was found, containing a considerable sum of money, and his watch, which was a gold repeater of great value; which proved beyond a doubt that he had not been robbed.

"From a fear of getting into trouble, the landlord of the public house where my brother lay, had summoned the coroner, with the utmost despatch, and an inquest was held upon the body before it was cold. At this investigation it had been decided that the gentleman had been killed in a duel with some person unknown, as the two pistols being found at a distance from each other, proved he had not put an end to his own existence, and his property being untouched, was a presumptive evidence that he had not fallen by the hand of a robber. The mournful ceremony was over before the arrival of Graham, who reprobated their precipitation in the strongest terms, exclaiming 'That he was sure his dear master was not dead, but had only fainted through loss of blood.'

"He had his lord removed, therefore, as soon as a litter could be provided, with the tenderest caution; but, as I have already related, disappointment was the sad result of all the faithful creature's endeavours.

"The consequence of this mournful event, was a serious fit of illness to my father, whose agonised feelings were too much for his constitution, he reproached himself incessantly with his son's death, believing that his own severity had driven him on his ruin; notwithstanding the circumstance of two pistols being found at a distance from each other, my father always thought Lord Durham had killed himself, although the note found in his pocket

by Graham, but too plainly pointed out the mournful truth, and left not a shadow of doubt upon my mind that my brother had been trepanned by the vile forgery, into the power of an assassin; who that assassin was, has never been discovered, though I must own my suspicions rested on one person only, either as the principal, or at least the employer. My father sent for me the day after he took to his bed, and endeavoured by his tenderness to atone for the harsh manner in which he had treated me.

"He mentioned his intentions of acknowledging Lady Durham and her infant, and sent me to the place of her concealment, with a kind message to that purport.

"But alas! a new sorrow was prepared for me: the retreat of the unfortunate Emily had been discovered by her implacable father, who forcibly conveyed her to one of his own mansions in a distant county. The lovely creature had refused to part with her child, who was accordingly permitted to accompany her in her banishment.

"My father received the news of this fresh act of cruelty with real concern. He had rested his hopes of conciliating his uneasy conscience by showing to the beloved wife of his lamented son, the deep penitence he felt for his former cruelty, and endeavouring to atone for it by every act of tenderness her forlorn situation required. This mournful satisfaction was, however, denied him, and he took on so heavily, that his grief produced a train of disorders, which soon became fatal. He survived his son only thirteen months; during the whole of that melancholy period, I lived totally secluded from society. Lady Petersfield endeavoured in vain to displace me from my father's sick-room; I was tenacious of my post as head nurse, and as my services appeared more agreeable to my unhappy parent than any other person's all her manœuvres were fallacious.

"When her ladyship found I was stationary, she came less frequently into the apartment, and soon returned to her gay habits, without concerning herself about the invalid, whom she represented as a hypochondriac, to all her acquaintance. Indeed her ladyship's spirits appeared better than ever, after my dear brother's death. Her favourite point was obtained, her son was now Lord Durham. She heard of my brother's marriage, and that there was a child, but her indefatigable genius soon discovered that it was a daughter, and therefore not to be feared. During the whole time my father lived, I received no letter from Lady Durham, nor could I gain any access to her by all the stratagems I could devise; various and tormenting were the reports spread abroad of that interesting creature.

"Sometimes I heard she was in a deep decline; at others, that she had quite recovered her health and spirits, and was about to emerge from her retirement, and become the ornament of *ton*. I dared not to mention these vague rumours to my father, whose spirits became weaker every day, and whose remorse was frequently beyond the control of reason. At length the awful moment arrived—the agonised frame could no longer support the painful struggle—my poor father died of a broken heart, in his forty-ninth year, and left me an isolated being, without one friend to console me. I could not remain with Lady Petersfield, the sight of her was insupportable; I therefore removed as soon as I decently could to my Aunt Morrison's, where I remained until I married Lord Ellincourt, which event took place the ensuing year.

"The bustle of my marriage obliged me to mix more with the world, and by degrees I recovered a portion of my former spirits, yet still I heard nothing of my poor Emily that was satisfactory:

she never appeared in public, and I had every reason to suppose she was a close prisoner in her father's gloomy mansion in Westmoreland. Seven years had elapsed without my obtaining any light upon the subject, when, one day, taking up the newspaper, I was struck by reading the following paragraph:—'On Thursday died, at her father's seat, in Westmoreland, Lady Emily Hinchinbroke, only daughter of the Earl of Somertown; her ladyship has been long in a declining state.' I was inexpressibly shocked. 'Poor victim of implacable revenge,' said I, 'thou hast then escaped from thy dreary prison! But what alas! is become of thy offspring?' The air of disclaiming her husband's title, in announcing Lady Durham's death, seemed to indicate that her child was no more.

"Eight years more elapsed before I was convinced this idea was erroneous; I then received the following words, written in a beautiful small-hand:—

"Dear Aunt,

"I have been taught to love you by the best of mothers, and I do love you with all my heart, though I have never been so happy as to see you. My grandfather is gone to Ireland on some business, and my kind governess has promised to take me to your house, if you will condescend to receive your dutiful and affectionate Niece,

EMILY TRENTHAM."

"I could not doubt that this letter came from my brother's child, and I was delighted beyond measure with the sweet idea of folding her to my bosom. My answer may be guessed, and the next day the sweet angel was introduced to me. I will not pretend to describe what I felt when I beheld the most striking likeness of my injured

Seymour, in the soft features of his lovely daughter. A more perfect beauty I never saw, nor a female so devoid of vanity. She seemed the very soul of affection, and capable of interesting the sternest heart in her favour. This opinion was confirmed by her governess, who assured me that Lady Emily had so won upon her grandfather, that she believed his lordship loved no other being upon earth but herself. The sweet girl could stay but a short time with me, but we often renewed the pleasure we experienced in meeting during Lord Somertown's absence.

"These visits were, however, suspended at his return, and a letter now and then, clandestinely exchanged, was all our consolation, under the privation. I did not see the dear Emily again for two years, and then I found her every thing the fondest heart could wish, in mind and person; but there was an air of melancholy about her that greatly distressed me, as it appeared unnatural to her; she blushed when I questioned her, and replied that she would some day lay open every thought of her heart to me; but at present she must be excused. Alas! I saw her no more from that period, for about this time her cruel grandfather died, and I at first hoped, when I heard the news, that the lovely girl's emancipation would follow. In this hope I was fatally mistaken, his son and successor, the present lord, was the counterpart of his father, and seemed to consider his cruelty as much an inheritance as his estate.

"In his hands the hapless Emily found another tyrant, and she was soon afterwards married, against her inclination, it is generally thought, to a nobleman, whose name I shall not now mention, and went over with him to Ireland immediately. I am astonished she has never written to me since, although I have addressed several letters to her, supposing that the restraint she formerly suffered,

had now been agreeably changed to liberty. A murmur which has lately reached me, respecting her present situation, makes me very unhappy, but as it has not yet been confirmed, I will pass it over in silence.

"I hope, however, that my melancholy story has sufficiently impressed your mind with the truth of what I first advanced—That marriages contrary to the express prohibition of parents are generally unhappy, and often fatal."

CHAPTER V.

A Modern Bluebeard.

"WOULD you imagine my stupidity, my dear mother," said Lord Ellincourt, "I have been listening to your story with the most profound interest, because I took it into my wise head, that the *denoument* would prove *my* Fanny to be the daughter of your hero and heroine. A curious anachronism, certainly."

"Yes," replied Lady Ellincourt, "the daughter of my unfortunate brother is at least six years older than you are, and has been married several years."

"My sapience will be found a little more profound," said Lord Ellincourt, "in regard to the name of the nobleman who married that child of misfortune—I know him well."

"How is that possible?" asked Lady Ellincourt, "I am sure I never mentioned one of the personages in this mournful drama to you before. As Lord Somertown never acknowledged my brother's marriage with his daughter, nor would

ever permit her unfortunate offspring to be called by his name, I have strenuously avoided adverting to the melancholy story, even in my own family."

"Your own family have learned some of the particulars, nevertheless," answered Lord Ellincourt, "as I will shew you. About two months ago, I received a letter from my sister, which contains a long history of the lady you allude to, and who, by the bye, is wife to the Earl of Ballafyn, the Bluebeard of Ireland. You shall read Caroline's letter."

"Pray let me look at it directly," said Lady Ellincourt, "for the account I had was a very imperfect one, and I did not dare to inquire more particularly, lest I should revive a tale, which I wish to be forgotten."

"I never liked Lord Ballatyn," said Lord Ellincourt, "I have been often in his company, during his visits to England, though I little thought he was related to me. By Caroline's account he is a monster in the form of a man, who not content with rendering an innocent woman wretched, has now taken the diabolical measure of blackening her character. I will bring the letter when I come to-morrow, but I am engaged this evening, and cannot possibly call again."

"You are a provoking creature," replied Lady Ellincourt, "for I shall be upon thorns until I read Caroline's letter. I wonder she never mentioned the subject to me."

"She knew that it would revive some disagreeable remembrances," said Lord Ellincourt, "and therefore she forebore to touch upon it. You will see her reasons, when you read her letter; for my part I did not understand to what event she alluded, until your melancholy recital explained the enigma. To curtail the endurance of your suspense, I will inclose my sister's letter to you, in a

cover, as soon as I return home, and then my dear mother can indulge her curiosity immediately."

Lord Ellincourt kept his promise, and in a few hours his mother was in possession of the letter It was as follows:—

"My dear Edmund,

"I am truly sorry to hear you do not intend visiting Ireland this year, as I had made up my mind to expect you, and my good lord has positively assured me that he cannot afford to take me with him, when he goes to England, we shall not meet, therefore, for many months. I had a story, so much in the marvellous to entertain you with, had you kept your word of spending the Christmas with us, and I had intended to reserve the surprise for a winter evening's *delassement*, but now you must have it in a letter.

"You have frequently mentioned Lord Ballafyn's brother, Col. Ross, as one of your intimates, and therefore I dare say you are no stranger to his lordship. Whether his beautiful exterior has the power of prejudicing his *own* sex in his favour, I cannot tell, but it has had but too much success with ours. Some years ago, this fascinating nobleman married one of the loveliest women England ever produced, and brought his bride with him to Ballafyn Castle, where she was looked up to as a divinity by all the guests who were admitted to the Castle.

"Lady Ballafyn's carriage was such as the strictest prudence, joined to the most unaffected modesty, would dictate; but the melancholy that seemed to prey upon her spirits excited the sympathy of many, and the curiosity of all. This was naturally supposed to originate in the treatment she received from her husband, who, although the greatest libertine that ever entered the pale of matrimony, took it into his wise head to be jealous

of her, and led her a life suitable to his liberal ideas of female chastity.

"All this, Lady Ballafyn bore with unrepining patience, and finding that her unreasonable lord appeared displeased with the admiration she excited, the charming Emily declined going into public as much as she possibly could.

"Lord Ballafyn permitted his wife to return to England for her lying-in, and she passed several months in her native country after that event; during which period the child died, and the poor lady returned to Ireland, in a state of mind bordering on melancholy, and never afterwards mixed with any company whatever. Lord Ballafyn's visitors now consisted of gentlemen only; and Lady Ballafyn, either by her own choice, or his cruelty, inhabited an obscure corner of the castle, where her very existence was nearly forgotten.

"It is said that she has visited England once, during one of her lord's absences, unknown to him, and that a discovery which he lately made of that transaction, has been the cause of the cruelty with which she has been treated within these few months. Such unheard of barbarities, were, I believe, never before practised, unless by his namesake, ***Bluebeard***, which title has been bestowed upon his lordship for his savage conduct, by all the ladies in the neighbourhood.

"My maid assures me that the poor lady has been shut up for days together without provision, and that the monster has more than once lifted his ugly paw against her, and even dragged her by the hair of her head from one apartment to another. No person is suffered to have access to her, nor can any letter reach her hand, as she is surrounded by his creatures, and never left one moment to herself.

"A few months ago a young man of noble mien, and with the most beautiful countenance in the

world, was seen creeping about the purlieus of the castle, and endeavouring to penetrate within its ponderous walls; his attempts were, however, fruitless, and at last he applied himself to one of the servants, whom he endeavoured to interest in his cause, by a bribe, that showed however mean his apparel might be, that he was not in indigent circumstances.

"The servant pocketed the bribe, and, like many of his betters, who do the same, without the least intention of earning what he had accepted, he listened to all the stranger had to say, and promised to obtain for him what he wished, namely—an interview with Lady Ballafyn. The hour of midnight was appointed for the meeting, and the unwary youth, trusting to his deceitful betrayer was led into the presence of the exasperated lord; who, after loading him with every epithet of abuse, assured him that the only means of saving his life, was by making a full confession of his own and Lady Ballafyn's guilt. The youth listened to the base proposal with silent contempt, and when forced by his persecutors to answer the charge, he persisted in asserting the innocence of the traduced lady, and declared that she knew not of his coming, and therefore could not be culpable, if *he* was.

"He refused to answer any farther questions; treating the threats of his persecutors with ineffable disdain. 'To *die*,' said the gallant youth, 'is no such mighty hardship, but to betray a trust is *impossible* to a man who thinks as *I* do.' He was kept several days prisoner at the castle, in order to extort some confession from him, but when Lord Ballafyn found him impervious to all his stratagems, he employed some of his myrmidons to get rid of him in a way that has not yet been properly ascertained. Some reports say that the stranger has been sent to T—— Goal to take his trial the next assizes, as a housebreaker: Others,

that he has been smuggled on board a transport lying at Y———— at the time, that was bound for the West Indies, whither he was sent as a recruit in a regiment going in that ship thither; the captain of which is a creature of Lord Ballafyn s. But my maid, who always deals in the marvellous as well as the horrific, assures me that he was thrown down the black rock, that hangs over the sea, a little distance from Ballafyn Castle, and that his ghost has been seen every moonlight night since, standing on the crag of the rock, and pointing to the restless surges beneath.

"The people pretend that this interesting stranger resembled Lady Ballafyn so strikingly, that he might have been supposed to be herself in man's attire.

"It is impossible to hear stories like these with indifference; I confess, therefore, that I have been deeply interested by this tale, particularly so, as I understand the unfortunate lady is a near relation of ours. I don't know whether you ever heard of an ill-fated marriage in our family, that caused my poor grandfather's death. My mother could tell you the sad history more perfectly than I can, but I would not have you ask it, unless she leads to it herself, for I have heard that the sad consequences of that fatal union nearly overset her reason, during the first shock she sustained.

"Lady Ballafyn is the offspring of that marriage, and seems to inherit the misfortunes of her parents. But to return to my own ideas on the subject. My imagination, which you know, my dear brother, is tolerably fertile, has formed half a score of romances out of the materials I have been able to collect, the most probable of which, appears to me to resemble the pathetic tale of 'Owen of Carron; or, the tragedy of Douglas.' The stranger must be a son of Lady Ballafyn's, by a former marriage, and having just found out who is his

parent, he has experienced the fate of the artless Owen, or the more magnanimous Douglas. And my maid says that the stranger appeared too old to be the son of Lady B. and if that be true, he *must* be her lover, and her lord is not quite so culpable as we think him. And yet the said Lady Ballafyn did not expect him, nor know any thing of his coming. He might therefore be a lover, though not a favoured one; and yet why did he not come before, if he meant to come at all; and if Lady B. did not know of his coming, how could he expect she would receive him, or, what end could he hope to have answered by so dangerous a step? In short I am lost in a labyrinth of conjecture, and I heartily wish you were here, Edmund, to aid my search for the clue that must lead me out of it.

"I think it would have been a delightful feat of knight-errantry, for you to have delivered the fair lady from the claws of her persecutor, which you might have done in the character of her nearest relation. Your intimacy with Col. Ross would have gained access to the Castle for you, and your own ingenuity must have accomplished all the rest. You see what a charming plan I had laid out for your winter's campaign, but your obstinate attachment to your own country spoils every thing. One thing I forgot, which is a material part of my story—Lord Ballafyn has publicly reported that his lady has been guilty of infidelity, and that, for that reason, he chooses to immure her in solitory confinement; he pretends that he has *detected* the crime he alleges against her, asserting that he has several letters in his possession that are irrefragable proofs of her delinquency.

"One of his lordship's friends ventured to ask him why he did not sue for a divorce, from a woman, who reflected such dishonour upon his name. But he replied, that he knew that was

what Lady Ballafyn wished, and therefore he was determined to disappoint her. This is his *ostensible* reason, but depend upon it the *real* one originates in his own evil conscience. How could a man demand justice upon his wife for a breach of faith who has a mistress in every place he inhabits? He keeps a very expensive lady in Dublin; another in England; and there is one who was his favourite before he married, who resides within the precincts of his own demesne, and this woman it is, they say, who instigates his cruelty to his suffering lady. What think you of our modern *Bluebeard?*"

When Lady Ellincourt had perused her daughter's letter, she felt the most poignant affliction.

Some faint rumours had reached her that Lord Ballafyn had suspected his lady's fidelity, but as no steps were taken to obtain a divorce, Lady Ellincourt gave no credit to them. The miserable truth was now but too evident; her niece was in the hands of a cruel and abandoned libertine, and her character, and perhaps her life, would be sacrificed to gratify the malice and revenge of his depraved mistress. The sweet creature appeared destitute of friends to espouse her cause, and therefore wholly at the villain's mercy!

"Oh! my brother," exclaimed Lady Ellincourt, clasping her hands in agony, "my beloved brother, the sufferings of the innocent offspring awaken in my mind the sad remembrance of thy cruel death. The wounds of my heart are torn open, and bleed afresh, and I am still the same powerless creature, as when weeping thy misfortunes, I can only *lament;* to *remedy* is not within the compass of my power!"

CHAPTER VI.

Correspondence.

When the first emotions of Lady Ellincourt's sorrow had subsided, she sat down to write to her daughter. Her letter contained a gentle reprimand for not immediately informing her of the mournful situation of her beloved niece, and requested her never to spare her feelings, in future, at the expence of her humanity. "I know," added she, "that I am a poor powerless creature, as to any thing I can do, but my mind suggests a measure which may, perhaps, be adverte. to with success.

"Cannot you, my dear Caroline, find some generously disinterested person who could be persuaded to write to Lord Somertown, and state the actual situaton of his niece. I have been told he is very fond of her, and I think if he knew how she is treated, he would find some means to redress her wrongs.

"The notice must not come from our family, or how readily would I fly to acquaint him with her peril; for my anxiety for my poor Emily, would supersede every feeling of resentment in my bosom and force me to act in concert with my bitteres, enemy, so that her welfare appeared likely to result from such a coalition. I understand that Lord Somertown resides constantly now at his seat in Yorkshire, a prey to the most profound melancholy. I fear there is but too much cause for such a disposition. Reflection to a mind like his, must be exquisite torture. Surely he will be glad of something to rouse him from the torpor of

despair, and force him to exert all the energy he possesses in behalf of his suffering niece."

In answer to this letter, Lady Ellincourt receiv ed the following from her daughter :—

"The object of your solicitude, my dearest mother, is no longer an inhabitant of this cruel world! Lady Ballafyn had been dead a fortnight when your letter reached me. I wonder you have not seen it announced in the English papers.

"Innumerable reports are spread about here, concerning this event. Many people assert that her ladyship met an untimely death by poison, administered to her by her cruel lord. Of this number Mrs. Flyn, my maid, is the most devout believer, for she has seen people there who have seen Lady Ballafyn's ghost all in white upon the crag of the rock, where her lover appeared some time ago. 'And what, my lady, could take her ladyship's ghost there, you know, if she had come fairly by her death?' This is Flyn's creed, and the whole bench of bishops could not turn her from it, were they to try.

"Other people assert that Lady B. has made her escape to England, and that it was only a log of wood that was so pompously interred, a few days ago, and that my lord's reason for choosing to believe her dead, is because he intends marrying the woman he has kept so long, and make her as good as a great many more ladies who wear coronets, and came by them in the same manner. But for my part I must confess that I am a convert to neither opinion; for I think it extremely natural that a person of a delicate frame, like Lady Ballafyn, should sink under the pressure of ill-treatment and confinement, particularly as she had not one sympathising bosom to whom she could impart her sorrows—I only wonder she has lived so long.

"I hope my dear mother's excellent sense will

suggest the best consolation to her. The death of Lady Ballafyn is the emancipation of a wretched slave, and ought to be hailed with joy instead of lamentation.

"That she was innocent I don't entertain a doubt, and in that case what an exchange is her's! Sinking as she was beneath accumulated sorrow and distress, both of body and mind. She is now translated to the fulness of glory and happiness for evermore."

"Lady Ellincourt's mind was relieved from the tortures of suspense and anxiety, by the mournful news conveyed to her in her daughter's letter, and her agitated feelings gradually sunk into the calm of settled melancholy. The last vestige of her beloved brother was now extinct, and his name for ever blotted out. The sweet offspring of that unhappy marriage had terminated her youthful career in a manner no less wretched than her parents had done before her; but she could now suffer no more, and fear subsided with hope, in the heart of Lady Ellincourt.

Lord Ellincourt beheld, with real concern, the havock grief was making on the delicate frame of his indulgent mother, and he used his utmost endeavour to divert her melancholy. The society of the engaging Fanny seemed to promise the best antidote to the gloom that was creeping over her. Lord Ellincourt intreated his mother therefore to take the child from school, and by making her the constant inmate of the house, insure to herself the comfort of a companion, whose intrusions on her privacy would be optional.

Lady Ellincourt approved of the scheme, and Fanny was installed in her new abode before another week had elapsed, to the almost uncontrolable joy of the lively girl, who thought she could never sufficiently express her gratitude to her ***dear —dear mamma***, as she now styled Lady Ellincourt,

for a favour as delightful as unlooked for. That Fanny might be no loser by the removal, Lady Ellincourt determined to engage an accomplished governess to complete the education of her darling under her roof.

Miss Bridewell who just at that period was wishing to get rid of her *dear* Dawson, recommended that Lady as the fittest person she knew to fill up the important station.

Lady Ellincourt approved the measure, and Mrs. Dawson became the *governante* of *Fatherless Fanny*, assuming as much importance upon the occasion, as if she had been appointed to the tuition of the first princess in the known world.

It is necessary in this place to mention, that soon after the Lady Trenthams' left school, the amiable Lady Maria, became the wife of the *far from amiable* Col. Ross, whose pleasing exterior had beguiled her of her heart, before she was aware that she had one; and whose large fortune and high family rendered him agreeable to the marquis of Petersfield as a son-in-law, particularly as there appeared to be a fair chance of the family title and estate of Ballafyn centering in that gentleman, as his brother had been married many years without having an heir, and the rumours that had reached the Marquis respecting Lady Ballafyn's supposed infidelity, rendered it probable his lordship would never marry again.

During the ensuing five years of Fanny's life, little occurred to vary the scene. She was the cherished companion of her kind benefactress, and the still undiminished favourite of Lord Ellincourt, who, though he continued his giddy career through the mazes of fashion, never abated aught of his kindness towards his adopted child.

Mrs. Dawson had now completed the education of her pupil, and the recommendation of Lady Ellincourt, obtained for that lady a similar

situation in the family of a lady who resided a part of the year in Ireland.

Mrs. Dawson it has before been observed, was of a disposition exactly calculated to make her way in the world. She well knew how to catch the whim of the moment, and to humour it with the most consummate skill.

She was always, therefore, a great favourite with her employers. Lady Ellincourt, who was one of the best women in the world, thought Mrs. Dawson the epitome of perfection, for to her observation she had appeared as pious as she was accomplished, and, in the latter point there was no deception; Mrs. Dawson was certainly full capable of the task she had undertaken, as far as elegant attainments extended, but poor Fanny would have imbibed but little of the true spirit of piety from her governess, had it not been for the genuine lessons bestowed upon her by her affectionate friend, Lady Ellincourt; and the firm foundation that had been laid by the amiable Emily Barlowe, during the infant years of the interesting orphan.

Mrs. Dawson had found the secret, however, of winning Fanny's affection, whose artless bosom, as incapable of suspicion as of deceit, judged every body of the pure model of her own heart. Every secret of her soul had been reposed in Mrs. Dawson's keeping, and she had not a thought she wished to conceal from the person she had so long considered in the light of a second self. To part with this tenderly beloved friend, was therefore a most painful trial for the affectionate girl, and Mrs. Dawson took care the impression should not be softened by any of the attentions Lady Ellincourt bestowed upon her favourite by way of amusing her thoughts, and diverting them from the object of her regret.

Fanny's grief, which had been continually in-

creased by the artful suggestions of Mrs. Dawson, appeared beyond the control of reason when the final separation took place, and to mitigate its violence Lady Ellincourt consented to an arrangement which had not her entire approbation, namely, the establishing of a regular correspondence between the pupil and her *ci-devant* governess, when at a distance from each other.

"This was exactly the object Mrs. Dawson had in view all the time, and the attainment of her wishes promised to gratify the two ruling passions of her mind, curiosity, and selfish policy. She well knew that by Fanny's letters she could obtain the knowledge of every material occurrence in Lady Ellincourt's family, and, over and above the satisfaction of acquiring that knowledge to her naturally curious mind, she might be able through her skill in manœuvreing, to turn some of them to her own advantage. Things being thus arranged in her own mind, Mrs. Dawson took her leave, with every exterior appearance of the deepest regret, although her heart secretly rejoiced at the change, as her salary was considerably augmented by the event, and she went away laden with marks of Lady Ellincourt's munificence, besides all the valuable trinkets she had obtained from the simple Fanny, by "*loving*" them for the sake of the "*dear —dear wearer.*"

CHAPTER VII.

The Separation.

Lord Ellincourt's attachment to Emily Barlowe, although it had never yielded to any new attraction, had not been sufficiently strong to induce his lordship to follow the amiable girl to Jamaica, as he had once talked of doing.

At length, however, an incident occurred that re-united them in the most unexpected manner possible.

Lady Ellincourt's health had been visibly declining for some time, and her physicians, after trying every remedy this country afforded, recommended the mild climate of Lisbon as the *dernier resort.* Lady Ellincourt received the *fiat* with real regret, as she was an enthusiastic lover of Old England, but the united entreaties of her son and the affectionate Fanny, at length overcame her objection, and she promised to acquiesce with the doctor's injunctions, provided her dear Edmund would accompany her.

This was precisely what her dear Edmund had always intended to do, and he assured his mother that nothing would give him greater pain than to be denied the pleasure of administering to her comfort and her safety during her exportation. And so said her tenderly-attached Fanny, when Lady Ellincourt asked her whether she would prefer being left at Miss Bridewell's or Lady Maria Ross's, during the forced absence of her maternal friend. "Surely my dear, dear mamma would not be so cruel as to talk of leaving *me* in

England, when ill-health obliges her to seek a distant home. In pity to my agonized feelings, do not pronounce so hard a sentence upon a heart which acknowledges no mother but you—which forms no wish so ardent as that of being able to shew the gratitude and affection that glows in it for you, my kind, my beloved, benefactress."

As Fanny pronounced these words, she clasped her arms round Lady Ellincourt's neck, and endeavoured, with one of her fascinating smiles, to shake the good lady's resolution. But, although deeply affected by the sweet girl's earnestness in the cause she was pleading, and fully convinced of the sincerity of her attachment, Lady Ellincourt was not to be persuaded by all the rhetoric poor Fanny was mistress of.

"I have well considered the subject we are upon, my sweet girl," replied her ladyship, "and I feel so thoroughly convinced of the impropriety of complying with your request, that I cannot suffer any persuasion to shake my resolution. You know me, my dear Fanny, and that selfish considerations have no weight with me. You will believe me, therefore, when I assure you that I practise great self-denial in withstanding your affectionate solicitations; for I can affirm, with truth, that there is nothing I leave behind I shall so truly regret as my tender and affectionate little nurse, Fanny.

"But, my dear girl, life is uncertain, even to the healthy; with invalids it seems still more precarious; and greatly would it embitter the pangs of death, could the painful reflection present itself to my mind, that my Fanny was exposed, by my imprudence, to the trying situation of being left, in a strange country, without a proper protector of her own sex to re-conduct her to her native country."

"But, my dear mamma," interrupted Fanny,

"will not Lord Ellincourt go with you, and whose protection could be better than his, should I, indeed, be deprived of my best friend?"

"Edmund would prove a kind friend and a powerful protector to my girl, I am sure," answered Lady Ellincourt; "but so young a man is not a *proper chaperon* for her, and that must be studied, my sweet girl. Maternal anxiety, such as mine, foresees and provides for every contingency. Be reconciled, therefore, my Fanny, to a determination which cannot be repelled, and which has been made after mature consideration, and from the very best motives."

It was in vain that Lady Ellincourt preached patience and submission to Fanny; no argument could convince her that it was right to separate her from her beloved mamma, and she wept incessantly at the *fiat* she could not alter. When urged by Lady Ellincourt to decide upon her choice of residence during her absence, she would reply, "It matters not where I go, all places will be alike to me, when my dear mamma is taken from me."

At length, however, she was induced, by Lady Ellincourt's insisting upon an answer, to choose Lady Maria Ross for her protectress, in preference to Miss Bridewell. Col. Ross's intimacy with Lord Ellincourt, and Lady Maria's near relationship to the Ellincourt family, had conspired to render them the most frequent visitors Lady Ellincourt had; and as Fanny loved Lady Maria with the truest affection, from the time she first became acquainted with that lady at Miss Bridewell's, it was natural she should prefer her protection to the formal jurisdiction of her *quondam* governess. Col. Ross had never been a favourite of Fanny's, although the uniform kindness and attention with which he treated her seemed to demand her gratitude.

Since his marriage, the Colonel had affected to consider Fanny in the light of a child; a mode of behaviour which seemed to increase rather than diminish with her increasing years and stature.

Lady Ellincourt's allowance for her favourite's maintenance was extremely liberal; and both the Colonel and Lady Maria appeared pleased with the arrangement, when they learnt that Fanny was to become their guest. Not so the affectionate girl; no projected plan of pleasure could rouse her from the sorrow into which Lady Ellincourt's determination of leaving her behind, had plunged her, and she was deaf to every thing Lady Maria could say, by way of consolatory advice, upon the subject.

At length the dreaded moment arrived, and Fanny was torn, more dead than alive, from the arms of her dear Lady Ellincourt, whose heroism never forsook her, and conveyed in Lady Maria's coach to that lady's house. Lady Ellincourt had wisely insisted that the parting should take place the day before her departure, as she judged herself unequal to the task of bidding her darling farewell, when about to encounter the fatigues and bustle of a journey, which, in her weak state, appeared already but too formidable.

Lord Ellincourt, notwithstanding the levity natural to him, possessed an excellent heart, and the tender attachment of the artless Fanny deeply afflicted it. When he pressed her in his arms, and kissed off the tears that rolled down her blooming cheeks, he thought it was impossible he should ever love any human being as he at that moment loved Fanny.

"Dear girl," said his lordship, "how shall I bear to live apart from you? The sight of you is become necessary to my happiness, nay, almost to my existence, and I verily believe I shall soon find that I cannot do without you."

Col. Ross was present when Lord Ellincourt thus expressed himself, and the heightened colour of his cheek, and the stern expression of his eye, too plainly told to the observing Lady Maria, that her husband was not pleased. Of the cause from whence his displeasure sprung, she was ignorant, but she had already learnt to watch the variation of his countenance, with the trembling anxiety of a dependant vassa..

Lord Ellincourt was too deeply absorbed in his own feelings to observe his friend, or he might have been tempted to join his solicitations to Fanny's, to persuade Lady Ellincourt to revoke her decree, and, even at that late moment, to suffer her disconsolate favourite to accompany her.

"Oh! that I were so dear to you as you say," exclaimed the artless Fanny. "Oh! that it were true, indeed, that you could not exist without seeing me. Lady Ellincourt would not then refuse to take me with her; she would compassionate the feelings of her son, although she has no pity for mine." Unconscious of the full force of what she said, Fanny clasped her hands together with an expression of tender anguish, whilst tears poured in abundance from her eyes, which were raised, as in supplication, to watch the countenance of her dear mamma, still cherishing the hope that she might relent.

Such a thing was, however, farther than ever from Lady Ellincourt's thoughts, as a suspicion that moment crossed her imagination, that rendered her dreaded journey a most fortunate circumstance in her estimation. Fanny's beauty had been an object so familiar to her eye, that its progressive improvement had not awakened any fears on Lord Ellincourt's account, until that moment; but her eyes appeared to be suddenly opened; and the energy with which he had just expressed himself, joined to Fanny's artless wish

of the realization of his love for her, seemed to strike conviction on her mind. "They love each other," said she, mentally, "and my imprudence has undone them both, unless this fortunate separation should wean them from each other."

Dear as Lady Ellincourt loved Fanny, and tenderly alive as she was to the happiness of her son, yet such was the effect of hereditary pride upon her mind, that the idea of uniting her son to a person of obscure birth, was worse to her imagination than even the prospect of his being miserable for life.

CHAPTER VIII.

A Wedding!

Under such impressions, the result may be anticipated. Lady Ellincourt remained firm, and Fanny inconsolable. The latter was conveyed, in a state of mind bordering on despair, to the house of Col. Ross, where the tenderest attentions were lavished upon her by the amiable Lady Maria, and every scheme of pleasure devised likely to dissipate her melancholy. In the mean time, Lady Ellincourt pursued her journey, accompanied by her son, on every turn of whose countenance she dwelt with unceasing anxiety, and endeavoured to trace, in his minutest actions and most unguarded expressions, the fatal effects of the passion she imagined he had imbibed from the too-lovely object of both their affections.

What pleasure did it give this anxious mother, then, when the amount of all her scrutiny proved the supposition an error, and convinced her, be-

yond the possibility of a doubt, that she was mistaken in her conjecture, at least as far as related to her son. In regard to poor Fanny, she did not feel the same assurance; the excess of her grief —the artless manner in which she had expressed it—and her wish, so fervently uttered, that she were, indeed, necessary to Lord Ellincourt's happiness, continually recurred to Lady Ellincourt's mind, and filled it with sadness; for so dear was Fanny to her maternal heart, that the idea of her being doomed to suffer under the influence of a hopeless passion, gave the most poignant feelings of anguish to her bosom.

Arrived at Lisbon, Lady Ellincourt soon found benefit from its salubrious atmosphere, and her son had the satisfaction of seeing his mother's health improving hourly.

A few weeks after their arrival, they were agreeably surprised, one morning, by a visit from Mr. Barlowe, who informed Lord and Lady Ellincourt that he and his whole family were come to reside some months, perhaps years, at Lisbon; as their stay depended upon the life of an infirm relation, who was immensely rich, and who intended to make Mr. Barlowe her heir; had entreated him to come and reside near her, during the little time that she had to stay in this world; and that, in order to comply with that request, he had brought his whole family with him, intending to go to England after the death of his relation, and fix his abode there, as his estate in Jamaica had been disposed of previous to his quitting that island. The evident pleasure with which Lord Ellincourt listened to this recital, delighted his mother, as she saw plainly, in his eager, but confused, enquiries after Emily Barlowe, that the interest that sweet girl had excited in her son's bosom was still undiminished in fervour.

It gave her still greater satisfaction, when she

learned, by a seemingly careless enquiry, that Emily was disengaged, or at least that no positive plan of a matrimonial nature had yet occupied her father in that respect to her.

The eldest daughter was on the point of marriage with a young West-Indian, of immense fortune, whose attachment to her was sufficiently potent to induce him to follow her to Lisbon, whither curiosity, or, perhaps, coquetry, had led her, in spite of her lover's entreaties, and her father's remonstrances, who had intended to witness her nuptials before he left Jamaica.

The haughty Caroline, however, chose to enjoy the triumph of leading her captive from one quarter of the globe to the other, and her vanity was not a little inflated when she found her influence strong enough to accomplish her wishes. The gallantry of this ardent lover devised a thousand *fetes* for the gratification of his beloved mistress, and on these occasions Lord Ellincourt was sure to make one of the party, and, by his attentions to Emily, to prove that she, too, had a lover no less ardent than her sister's.

To talk about Fanny, their mutual favourite, was, at first, their excuse for being so often seated near each other; but, by degrees, another topic, more agreeable to both, was substituted in the place of Fanny, and the result was an application to Mr. Barlowe, for his permission to address his daughter; and, as no reasonable objection could be started to the alliance, it was soon agreed to on both sides.

Lady Ellincourt had now the happiness of seeing her son united to the lady she most approved of, and safe from the witchery of the fascinating Fanny. Yet still the good lady heaved a sigh now and then for the poor girl, lest her youthful heart should have been touched by the influence she had dreaded for her son. The let

ters which her ladyship received from her favourite, did not, however, give any reason to suppose her so affected; for, when she replied to the one in which Lady Ellincourt had spoken of her son's intended union with Emily Barlowe, Fanny thus expressed herself—

"Thank you dearest, dear mamma, for your charming news. Oh! what a happy girl will your Fanny be, when she sees her dear papa and her dear Emily together, and thinks that they will never more be parted, and that she shall always live with them, and love them, and see them every day!"

These expressions certainly had not the appearance of a *hopeless attachment;* yet still Lady Ellincourt had taken the idea so strongly in her head, that, like most old ladies, when they form an opinion, she did not like to give it up, and acknowledge herself in an error, even to herself.

CHAPTER IX.

A Female Rattle.

In the mean time, Fanny, "who never dreamt of love," was passing her time in the full enjoyment of innocent delight. The spirits at sixteen are very elastic, and her sorrow at the loss of her dear Lady Ellincourt's society soon gave way to the kind attentions of the affectionate Lady Maria, who spared no pains in the friendly task of amusing her dear Fanny.

Col. Ross was no less attentive, no less kind, to the happy girl, but far less successful in his

efforts to please. It was not that Fanny felt ungrateful for his kindness, but that she experienced sensations of repugnance she could not account for, whenever he addressed himself to her, particularly when they happened to be alone; for then there was a fervour in his manner, a look in his eyes, as disagreeable as it was new to her; and which, though it roused her resentment, she dared not to complain of, as she knew not why she felt offended, although the emotions of anger was irresistible.

Col. Ross had penetration enough to see that he was no favourite with Fanny, and this he attributed to a prepossession in favour of Lord Ellincourt, rather than any deficiency in his own powers of pleasing: and the same vanity suggested the probability of gaining upon the unsuspecting heart of his intended victim, and supplanting the image of Lord Ellincourt, which he supposed was cherished there, with all the fervour of a first love. Amongst the friends to whom Fanny was now introduced by her new protectors was a young lady of immense fortune, of the name of Stanhope, who was, like most other heiresses, a spoiled girl, in the fullest sense of the word.

Accustomed from her infancy to have her will, the law of all about her, she had reached the age of eighteen, without having been once contradicted. Miss Stanhope was therefore the epitome of caprice and fashionable folly. Yet was she naturally of a generous disposition, and perfectly good tempered. This young lady had hitherto resided with her grandmother, whose doating affection had been the cause of her follies.

This lady was lately dead, and the care of Miss Stanhope's person and fortune had devolved upon the Marquis of Petersfield, whose ward she was, and at whose house she was to reside, until

her marriage, which was expected to take place in a few months.

This alliance had been projected by the parents of the young people during their infancy, and was considered as a most advantageous *union* of *property* for both parties. The young nobleman intended for Miss Stanhope's husband was the Duke of Albemarle, who was about four years older than herself, and also an orphan and only child.

The young Duke had been abroad some years, on account of the delicate state of his health, for which the climate of Sicily had been recommended by his physicians. He was now on the point of returning to his native country, in order to fulfil his father's will, by marrying Miss Stanhope.

Lady Ellincourt had been absent several months at the time of Fanny's introduction to Miss Stanhope, and it was declared absolutely necessary for the perfect re-establishment of her health, that her ladyship should remain in Portugal some months longer; a circumstance which gave the utmost alarm to poor Fanny, whose terrified imagination was continually presenting to her the dangers of her benefactress's protracted stay, in a country so formidably threatened by the rapacious invader. Miss Stanhope laughed at her fears. "My dear girl," said that wild young lady, "I perceive you are as fond of Lady Ellincourt as I was of my poor grand-mamma; and, if you live with her much longer, you will be just such a fool as I am; so I think it will be an excellent thing if the French should run away with her, and not let her come home any more."

"Lady Ellincourt is certainly very indulgent to me," replied Fanny, "but she never spoiled me."

"There's a conceited puss," interrupted Miss Stanhope; "she wishes people to think that she can bear indulgence better than I can, and that

all the old women in the world cannot *spoil her.* Well, child," added she, laughing, "since you are *indulgence proof,* by your own confession, you must promise to spend the honey-moon with the poor Duke and me, when we are married, for we shall be vapoured to death, depend upon it, until we get used to each other's ways."

"You seem to have formed a strange idea of conjugal felicity, Miss Stanhope," replied Fanny, "to talk of being vapoured to death in the society of your husband, so soon after your marriage."

"Formal creature!" rejoined the mad-cap, "I'll venture to lay a wager, when thou art married, thou wilt trot about arm-in-arm with thy lord and master, like Darby and Joan, and talk about the supreme felicity of *unlimited confidence, and congenial spirits.*"

"I hope," said Fanny, smiling, "if ever I *do* marry, I shall be able to realise your charming picture, or else I would rather live single."

"Live single, my dear!" interrupted Miss Stanhope, "why that is the extent of human felicity, in my ideas of happiness. I would give half my fortune this minute to be allowed to live single; at least until I could find somebody amiable enough to make me change my mind."

"Is not the Duke amiable?" asked Fanny.

"I really cannot tell," replied Miss Stanhope; "I have never seen him since he was an Eton boy, and then the *animal* was well enough to look at, but I always hated him, because I knew I should be obliged to marry him."

"But who can oblige you to marry his Grace," said Fanny, "against your inclination? You have no parents alive, and surely your guardian's power cannot extend to such violence."

"You are a little simpleton," answered Miss Stanhope, "and know nothing about the world, or its ways, I can see that, so I must teach you. It

is but too often seen that frail mortals are apt to repine at the unequal distribution of the good things of this life. This is a most silly calculation, the possessions of the wealthy have always their concomitant miseries, supplied either by the pride, avarice, or ambition of their relatives. The wise junto of fathers, mothers, uncles, and aunts, that made up this wise match for the poor Duke of Albemarle and me, took infinite pains to strike the balance between those that envied his title and *my* riches, and the then unconscious possessors of the baubles, by dooming us both to be tied together, whether we liked it or not. Whichsoever refuses to fulfil the compact, forfeits the bulk of their fortune to the other, and is to suffer the punishment of poverty and repentance, all the remainder of their lives, for the delinquency. Now, though I would give *half* my fortune to be off the wedding, I should not like to lose the *whole*, and therefore I must submit to be *noosed*. The Duke, I dare say, is of the same mind, but, I suppose, though he might *prefer* my fortune *without* myself, to the taking it with all the incumbrances, yet he would not like to give me his largest estate to be off the bargain. Thus, you see, are two people going to be tied together, to please their dead papas and mammas, who wish them at the Antipodes."

Whilst Fanny listened to Miss Stanhope's wild description of her embarrassing situation, the smile of gaiety forsook her lip, and tears trembled in her eyes. "Merciful heavens!" thought she, "how inscrutable are thy ways! The rich heiress of incalculable wealth is an object of pity to the pennyless orphan, whose daily maintenance depends upon the bounty of a stranger!"

"Moralizing, I wager," said Miss Stanhope, looking earnestly in Fanny's face; "yes, yes, I see it in that twinkling eye, and care-fraught brow.

I dare say, my little nun would renounce the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and run into a cloister, or any where, rather than marry a man she did not like. Oh! I can see a very eloquent exordium ready to escape the ruby boundaries of that pretty little mouth, which, I dare say, would be very edifying to any little miss or master, that would twirl their thumbs, and listen to it; but keep it in, my dear, for it will be lost upon *me*. I can neither moralize nor sermonize, nor listen to those who do! I am a predestinarian; what *must* be, *will* be; so, if I am to have the Duke, I *shall* have him; and, if I am not to have him, some Giant, or Genii, or *young Lochinvar*, will come just in time to carry me off at the last moment, and then you shall write me word whether the bridegroom behaved like the poor fool in Marmion, or whether he took another wife, as he ought to do."

"Oh, *I* will have nothing to do with your wedding," replied Fanny, "nor your bridegroom either, for you talk so shockingly upon the subject, that you frighten me, I assure you."

"Did you never hear, my dear," said Miss Stanhope, "of boys making a great noise to drown their own fears, when obliged to go through a church-yard at night. Such is my case at this moment; I rove and talk nonsense to banish unpleasant thoughts that crowd upon me; were I to suffer my spirits to flag, I should find it impossible to raise them again, so

"Away with melancholy!"

and the lively girl left the room, singing that popular air, with no small portion of Catalani's sweetness and vivacity.

Fanny's artless sweetness, and the gaiety resulting from innocence, that so particularly characterised her, rendered her a great favourite with Miss

Stanhope. Her vivacity was congenial to her own, but far more equal in its tenor. Unaccustomed to control, the slightest contradiction, the most trifling disappointment, had the power to discompose Amelia Stanhope, and put her into the "*pouts*," as she herself styled her fits of ill-humour; and, whenever the demon of ill-temper spread his malign influence, Fanny was the only person who could effectually dispel the cloud that obscured her countenance, and restore the capricious girl to her smiles again. Miss Stanhope became therefore the inseparable companion of Fanny, and as Lady Maria Ross positively refused to let her charge become a guest at the Marquis of Petersfield's, as Miss Stanhope was continually teazing her to be, that young lady passed nearly the whole of her time with her new friend, at Lady Maria's house, in Grosvenor Street.

Miss Stanhope was very fond of riding on horseback, and so eager was she for her favourite to partake of the amusement, that she presented her with one of the most beautiful horses that she could purchase, at which Fanny was not a little delighted, as she was as partial to the exercise as her lively friend, and had learned to be a tolerably expert horse-woman, during her summer visits to Ellincourt's country-seat.

Miss Stanhope had a carriage appropriated for her own use, and this conveyed the young friends out of town, where the horses, attended by two grooms, in Miss Stanhope's livery, waited their pleasure.

These rides formed the most delightful part of Fanny's life, for she was far from having any predilection in favour of nocturnal amusements; and although Miss Stanhope insisted upon her accompanying her wherever she *could* go, yet she would often have preferred the quiet retirement

of her own chamber to the brilliant ball-room, thronged opera, or motley masquerade.

Some of Lady Maria Ross's friends made a point of inviting Fanny to their entertainments, particularly when they perceived what a great favourite she was with the rich and celebrated Miss Stanhope; but a great number declined showing her that favour, from the aristocratical fear of making acquaintance with some obscure person whom *nobody* knew.

Fanny's story, as far as Lady Ellincourt was acquainted with it, was generally known; as the hope of tracing Fanny's family, by detailing her adventures, had induced that good lady to talk more of them than she would otherwise have done. Her ladyship had strictly adhered to the request made in the letter addressed to Miss Bridewell by the person who put Fanny under that lady's care, namely—not to add any name to the simple appellation of Fanny, by which only she had hitherto been distinguished.

These precautions, without having the desired effect, had exposed the sweet girl to the malevolent remarks of the envious and the unfeeling; and often had she experienced the mortification of hearing the enquiry of a stranger, respecting her name, answered by some ill-natured insinuation, from those whose envy had been excited by the eulogium that preceded the question.

One evening, in particular, a gentleman, whose attention had been long fixed upon Fanny, asked a lady, who was sitting next him, if she could inform him who that beautiful girl was—"I never beheld such a lovely creature," added he, in a tone of rapturous admiration.

"The girl is a perfect mystery," replied the ill-natured fair one, "I don't believe any body knows who she is, unless, indeed, it is the Ellincourt's. Some people suppose she is Lord El-

lincourt's daughter, but, for my part, I think it much more likely she is his mistress; and I am astonished that any body will admit such an unaccountable person to their parties. She has no name but that of Fanny, and she is generally called, by way of distinction, Fanny *nameless!* But I think it is past a joke to be obliged to sit in the same room with a person of such doubtful *origin;* and, indeed, for what we can tell, of such doubtful *character.*"

"I do not wonder," answered the gentleman, drily, "that any lady should object to sitting in the same room with that lovely creature, who is not proof against the envy natural to her sex; for, however dubious her *origin* may be, her claims to admiration are undoubted, and that is what few women will excuse in her."

Fanny had heard all that passed, for she was placed so near, it was impossible to avoid it; and her confusion may be imagined. When she was talking to Miss Stanhope, the next day, she mentioned the distress she had suffered, adding, "that she preferred staying at home to the being exposed to such cruel remarks."

"My dear creature," replied Miss Stanhope, "all this rises from that fiddle-faddle Lady Ellincourt permitting your story to be exposed, and persisting in calling you by the name of Fanny only. Tell me, candidly, is not such a proceeding calculated to raise the curiosity of the quietest creatures in the world, and to set the giant observation staring at you, wherever you go? Now, if Lady Ellincourt, with her old-fashioned ideas, as stiff and as formal as Queen Elizabeth's ruff, chooses to behave so ridiculously, surely Lady Maria Ross might have had more sense; she might have given you some fine sounding sirname, and trumped up some probable story about you, that would have quieted all the he and she

gossips that visit her, and then every thing would have gone on smoothly; but, never mind, I have a scheme in my head, and will put it in execution the first opportunity, and, depend upon it, it will answer."

"What is that, dear Amelia?" said Fanny, anxiously.

"Oh! never mind," replied Miss Stanhope, "you shall know nothing about it until my plot is ripe. The beauty of a novel consists in well-managed surprises, and I am determined mine shall be a first-rate performance. Do you know Lord Somertown?"

"No," replied Fanny, "I have heard his lord ship's name, but I never saw him."

"Oh! then you have a great pleasure to come," said Miss Stanhope; "he is the greatest quiz in nature, and I hate him abominably. He is the Duke of Albemarle's uncle and guardian; there is nothing in the world would please me so well as to see the wretch stand in the pillory, but I am afraid I shall never attain to such a good fortune. However, if I can but succeed in plaguing him, I declare I shall be the happiest girl in christendom."

"I hope, if you are going to play any tricks with Lord Somertown," said Fanny, looking grave, "that, my dear Amelia, you will not bring *me* into the scrape; for, you know, what would be tolerated in you, would be deemed unpardonable in me."

"Oh! don't frighten yourself," replied Miss Stanhope, "you shall have no hand in the plot, though the heroine of the piece."

"How the heroine? dear Amelia, you frighten me," said Fanny, looking alarmed.

"Nay, never look so terrified," replied her lively friend, "I don't intend you to *marry* Lord Somertown, although that would be an excellent

method of plaguing him, if you had *my* spirit, I would be bound to break his heart in three months; but you are too gentle and too good for such a task, so I don't think of that scheme.

"No, no, he *must* be tormented, and I think I know how. They say he broke his niece's heart by his cruel usage, and, if I can find the way to *his*, I will remunerate him as he deserves.

"I dare say there is not a spot bigger than half a split pea, in his whole heart, that is vulnerable to the sense of feeling, and my skill must be exerted to find it out, and transfix it with the shaft of remorse."

"Do what you please to *Lord Somertown*," said Fanny, "but for heaven's sake spare *me*, for I feel the most unaccountable dread of being implicated in the hoax, be it what it may?"

"You are a silly child," answered Miss Stanhope, laughing, "and your *unaccountable* dreads must not spoil the getting up of my play."

"Don't make it a *Tragedy*," said Fanny, emphatically.

"No, my dear, it is to be a *Melo-Drame*, suited to the taste of the times—something between an *Opera* and a *Puppet-Show*, with a great deal of *Pantomimic gesture*, *Operatic Pathos*, and fashionable *want* of *Common Sense*."

CHAPTER X.

An Adventure.

FANNY had always been accustomed to early rising from her infancy, and, therefore, unless she

Fanny surprized at the Curiosity of a Stranger in Hyde Park. Page 111

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went to bed very late indeed, she always, in fine weather, took a walk before breakfast.

As Lady Maria Ross was a *dormouse*, she knew nothing of this indulgence, or she certainly would not have suffered a girl of such extraordinary beauty as Fanny, to go strolling in the Park of a morning, accompanied only by her maid, who was very little older than herself, and far less fit to be trusted. The Grove in the Deer Park was Fanny's favourite stroll, and, one beautiful morning in May, having taken a longer round than usual, she determined to rest herself beneath the shade of one of the largest trees in that beautiful spot.

Her maid, Betty, had seated herself near her mistress, on the grass, and was expatiating, in her simple dialect, on the preference that ought to be given to a walk, such as they had had, to the unwholesome custom of lying in bed, in a close room, until "the sun was ready to *burn their noses*," to use an expression of her own.

"Well the ladies may want to wear such a heap of red powder on their cheeks, Miss Fanny," continued the girl; "for sure enough they stew themselves so, they must be, for all the world, like a boiled turnip, until they have daubed themselves over with paint! Well, Miss, you take the right method to look ruddy and wholesome, and that's what makes people call you so deadly pretty. Yes, and look there stands a gentleman as thinks so, I am sure, for he looks for all the world as if he was planet-struck, as my grandmother used to call it. Do, dear Miss Fanny, just look at him, it will do your heart good to see what a fool he looks like."

Fanny turned mechanically to look at the object Betty had pointed out to her. At a little distance from the spot where she was sitting, she beheld a tall gentleman, habited in black, of the most elegant form, whose countenance wore the

interesting cast of settled melancholy. His large dark eyes were fixed upon Fanny, with a look of enquiry, in which sorrow seemed blended with curiosity. So absorbed, too, was he in the contemplation, that he attempted not to withdraw his eyes, when Fanny turned to observe him. Confused at the scrutinizing glances of the stranger, Fanny arose to depart, without making any answer to Betty's animadversions.

"There, Miss," said the girl, in a discontented tone, "now you must go and stew yourself up at home, instead of taking the fresh air, as you ought to do, and all along with that saucy jackanapes staring at you so. Well, I wish I was a man, I would teach him better manners."

Fanny walked out in silence, and with a hurried step, whilst Betty followed her reluctantly, and continually turning her head to observe the stranger; at length she exclaimed, "Well, to be sure, if that dismal-looking man is not following us, I wish I may never be married."

"Betty," replied Fanny, in an angry tone, "you behave so ridiculously, that it is no wonder you excite the notice of every body that passes."

"Dear me, Miss Fanny, don't go to lay the blame upon me, for you know very well the gentleman is looking at you; so that, I dare say, he does not know I am here, no more than nothing at all!"

Betty talked so loud, and stared about her so, that she verified Fanny's accusation of attracting the notice of every body that passed her. A gentleman on horseback had been observing her some time, and, when he drew quite near, he jumped off his horse, and giving it to his groom, he came up to the terrified Fanny, and placing himself familiarly by her side, "For heaven's sake, my sweet girl," said he, attempting to take her hand, "where did you pick up that strange

monster for an attendant. I am sure you might get a good price for her at Exeter 'Change, to be shown amongst the wild beasts. Do you take her out with you to serve as a foil to your beauty?"

Fanny made no reply to this unmeaning jargon; but Betty felt herself exasperated at the mention of being shown amongst the wild beasts, that she could not contain her spleen, and she said, in an angry tone of voice, that "*some people* that found fault with *some people*, was a deal more *properer* to be sent amongst the wild beasts, than those they sneered at; and I wish," added she, tossing her head disdainfully, "that those that be dressed like gentlemen, behaved like gentlemen, and not go about affronting young ladies that are walking quietly along." The idea of ranking herself with the lady never entered poor Betty's head, but the gentleman understood her that she meant to be included amongst the *young ladies* she had mentioned, and he burst into an immoderate fit of laughter, and, throwing his arm familiarly round Fanny's waist, he expressed his hopes that *she* was not affronted with him, and as to the other *young lady*, he did not care about *her*.

Distressed and terrified beyond expression, Fanny struggled to get from her persecutor, who seemed equally diverted by *her* terror and her attendant's angry remonstrances. As it was early in the morning, but few people were in the Park, and the gentleman who had assailed Fanny, feeling no fear of a rescue, amused himself by seeming to let her escape, and then catching her again, until her exhausted spirits gave way, and she burst into tears.

At that moment the stranger, whose observation of Fanny had first excited Betty's loud exclamations, advanced to the assistance of the distressed girl, and, waving his hand with an air of

dignity, that immediately awed the rude object of his resentment, "Desist, sir," said he, in a tone of authority; "that young lady shall not be insulted whilst I can protect her."

"And pray, sir," said the brute, "*who are you?*"

"A man," replied the majestic stranger, "and that is a title *you* can lay no claim to, whilst you debase yourself so low as to insult a defenceless woman!"

Ashamed of the part he had acted, and yet unwilling to acknowledge his error, the gentleman appeared inclined to resent the interference of Fanny's protector, and muttered something about satisfaction. But, with a dignity truly irresistible, the interesting stranger again waved his hand; "Begone," said he, "and talk not of having sustained any degradation from me, since it is impossible, by the utmost exertion of malice, to place you in a more despicable light than that in which I first beheld you."

Then turning to Fanny, "Rely safely on my protection, sweet girl," said he, "and rest assured that I would sooner forfeit my life than suffer you to be insulted." Confused beyond the power of expression, Fanny could only courtesy in silence to her deliverer, and pursue her way towards home, with a quickened step, in which agitation and alarm were still visible. Her persecutor, however, had quitted the Park, and, mounting his horse, was out of sight in a minute: as he turned away from her, however, he said, in an insulting tone, "he hoped that, as she had found somebody more to her mind, she would act conformably to her own *real* character, and not give herself airs that did not belong to her."

"My dear young lady," said the benevolent stranger, who had just rescued Fanny, "I feel persuaded that you are as innocent as you look,

but I intreat you, in future, not to walk out without some attendant more proper to protect you than the one you have now got. This town and its ways, I can perceive, are new to you, and you are therefore more liable to encounter such treatment as that you have just escaped from, and, believe me, you may not always be so fortunate as you have now been. My sex are, in general, the staunch supporters of each other, and but too much inclined to join in oppressing, rather than in protecting, those whose guardians they are by the laws of nature and humanity. The strong resemblance you bear to a dear departed friend of mine, first attracted my notice, and, as I gazed upon your features, a train of melancholy recollections crowded upon my mind, and I, mechanically, and without design, followed your footsteps. I am most happy that I did so, as it gave me an opportunity of being of service to you!"

Fanny thanked her deliverer in terms of grateful respect, and assured him that, in future, she would never venture to walk out unprotected.

They had now reached the confines of the Park, and, as they were preparing to cross the road into Park-lane, Col. Ross overtook them on horseback. He immediately dismounted, and, giving his horse in charge to his groom, joined the party, with astonishment painted on his countenance.

Fanny, who saw that he expected an explanation, briefly related the circumstance of the insults she had received, and acknowledged the kind interference of the benevolent stranger. When Col. Ross had listened to the recital, he thanked the stranger for his timely assistance to his young ward; adding, in a tone that shewed he did not wish to cultivate the acquaintance, "The young lady being now under the immediate protection of her guardian, your walk, sir, need not be any farther interrupted;" and then, with a

stiff bow, he wished the gentleman a good morning.

The bow was returned with equal stiffness, and, measuring the colonel with a penetrating glance, the stranger said to Fanny, "Farewell, sweet girl, may heaven protect and keep you from the sly designs of the wicked, as well as the open attacks of the licentious. Remember the advice of a friend, *trust no man*, for, as the poet says, too truly,

"Women, like princes, find few *real* friends."

Then, waving his hand in the same dignified manner he had done before, and which seemed peculiar to himself, the stranger turned round and left them, pointing his footsteps towards the place he had left. As soon as Fanny reached Grosvenor Street, she retired to her chamber, where she was long before she could recover her wonted serenity.

Her terror, indeed, had subsided, but the recollection of the interesting stranger affected her in a manner she could not account for.

Every look of his beautiful countenance, every word he had uttered, seemed indelibly engraved upon her memory, and she dwelt, with a mixture of pain and pleasure, upon the most interesting image her fancy had ever yet contemplated.

The ungrateful manner in which Col. Ross had treated her deliverer, pained her to reflect upon, and she felt surprised that a man of the colonel's refined breeding should have shown himself so wanting in common civility, on an occasion which certainly did not warrant such an infringement on the laws of politeness. Fanny little imagined that jealousy had actuated the colonel's behaviour, whose suspicious eye had beheld in the stranger a more formidable rival than Lord Ellincourt himself.

It was true, that he appeared to be past the first bloom of youth, but it was impossible to behold him, and not confess that he had a most graceful form, and a most beautiful countenance. The soft melancholy that shaded his fine features excited so powerful an interest in the hearts of his beholders, that it was not easy to forget, after once seeing him.

At breakfast, Fanny related the adventures of the morning, and received a lecture from Lady Maria, for her imprudence in walking out so far without any companion but a silly country girl, more likely, by her awkwardness and folly, to excite than repel impertinence.

In this reprimand, Col. Ross joined with some severity; at the same time reproaching his lady with her carelessness and want of vigilance, in permitting a young lady, who was under her protection, to be so much her own mistress, as to be able to go out every morning without her knowledge.

"I don't know," added the Colonel, "what may be the consequence of Fanny's adventure; the man who delivered her from her first persecutor being, in my opinion, the most dangerous of the two!"

"Why do you think so, sir," asked Fanny, blushing deeply as she spoke.

"Because," replied the Colonel, "I believe him to be a notorious fellow, that I remember seeing tried for a swindler some years ago, and, if my conjecture is right, he will no doubt endeavour to make something out of this adventure."

"Oh, dear!" said Lady Maria, "I am frightened to death. We shall be robbed, I dare say. Indeed, Fanny, you must be very careful, and, above all things, never speak to that man, if you should happen to see him, let his appearance be ever so prepossessing, or the company you

see him in ever so respectable. Swindlers have the art of introducing themselves every where; indeed you cannot be too much upon your guard."

This was the very distrust Col. Ross had wished to inspire, and he was happy to see his artifice had produced the desired effect upon his lady, as he well knew she would effectually prevent the approach of the stranger, of whose future attempts to obtain the confidence of Fanny he was really apprehensive; but from a motive very different to the one he had assigned.

Fanny did not feel herself at all inclined to give credit to Col. Ross's insinuations against her deliverer, and she told him that she thought it illiberal to asperse the character of a man he did not know, upon no better foundation than the slight recollection of a face that might resemble the stranger's, without the least proof, in his power, of his being the unworthy person he represented him. "For my part," added the ingenuous girl, "I must confess, nothing short of conviction should induce me to think unworthily of that gentleman. His manner was so gentle, yet firm and manly, that it at once excited my esteem and respect. The expression of his eyes, too, spoke the goodness of his heart, and there was a something in the tone of his voice that seemed persuasion itself."

"At *seventeen*," replied Col. Ross, "such a superficial way of judging people may be excused; but believe me, Fanny, when I tell you, as a friend, that it would be very dangerous for you to rely upon so erroneous a guide, in choosing your acquaintance. The sound of a man's voice may be very pleasing, and the expression of his eyes well calculated to ensnare the hearts of young girls like you, without his possessing one *virtue* to entitle him to your esteem."

Fanny was silenced, without being convinced, and the conversation was here interrupted by the arrival of Miss Stanhope, who came to ask Fanny to ride out with her.

"If Fanny is prudent, she will refuse your request," said Col. Ross; "she has made one excursion too many this morning."

"How so?" asked Amelia.

The Colonel then told the story in his own way, whilst Fanny, out of all patience at the account he gave of her kind deliverer, took up the subject, and drew a picture of her new acquaintance that delighted Miss Stanhope. "Oh," said that giddy girl, "I am dying to see your swain, Fanny. I love pensive countenances beyond description: I hope you are not far gone in the *tender passion*, for, you may depend upon it, I shall become your rival, provided your delineation be a faithful one."

"It will be an honourable rivalship, to be sure," said Col. Ross, with a sneer, "a competition who shall accompany the hero on his voyage to Botany Bay, for there his career will end, depend upon it. He is a swindler, or I am a dunce!"

"I should think the *latter* assertion far more likely to be true than the *former*," said Miss Stanhope, laughing; "Fanny's account of the charming creature convinces me he is some *incognito* of consequence; and the glory of developing his real character will, perhaps, be mine. Thank you, my dear girl, for giving me something to do that will protect me from the demon ennui. The delightful task of finding out who this stranger is will amuse me for this month to come. But, mind, you must look out for him, and show him to me."

"You are likely to have better employment, Miss Stanhope," said the Colonel; "employment that will effectually defeat the attacks of that foe

to the happiness of the idle and the vain, which you have just mentioned."

"And pray, sir, to what employment do you allude?" asked Amelia.

"The Duke of Albemarle is expected in town to-day, and it will be hard if the preparations for your nuptials cannot supersede the idle curiosity this silly story has excited."

"A pretty remedy for ennui, upon my honour," said Miss Stanhope; "I am sure the very thoughts of my nuptials, as you call them, give me the vapours in an instant. Married, indeed! I am sure, if the Duke is as much averse to the match as I am, our union will make an excellent subject for a tragedy, and may be called—'The Double Sacrifice.'"

"Oh, the perverseness of human nature," exclaimed Lady Maria; "how many girls would be glad to change places with you. The Duke is a very handsome man, I understand, and very amiable. His title is ancient, and his fortune equal to your own."

"The two last considerations are the iron links that unite our destiny," said Miss Stanhope; "all the rest is of no consequence. But I'll tell you what, my dear friend, there is nobody that can judge so well of the fitting of the shoe, as the person that wears it. The world may think mine a bullion lot, but it must not be very angry with me for dissenting from its opinion. I would give half my fortune, and *all* the honour of being a Duchess, for the delightful privilege of choosing for myself."

Fanny sighed deeply, and then, blushing, because Col. Ross looked at her as if he wished to penetrate her thoughts, she rose from the table, and walked to the window. "Nay, don't sigh about it," said Miss Stanhope, "perhaps I might not choose your swain if I were to see him, and

if I should, I would give you the Duke in his stead, and you hear what a fine bargain his Grace is!"

"You are a mad creature, Amelia," said Lady Maria, "but I would advise you to see the Duke before you give him away, for you confess you do not know whether you like him or not."

"That is the only thing I *do* know," replied Miss Stanhope; "I am sure I do not like him, and I am sure I never shall like him; and all I have to wish is, that he may not like me; for he has the power of declining the alliance by the trifling sacrifice of ten thousand per annum; but poor I must lose *all* my fortune, if I rebel: but enough of this hateful subject, you have given me the horrors, so if you do not let Fanny ride with me this morning, to drive them away, I will never forgive you."

"If Fanny rides with you, *I* must make one of the party," said Col. Ross, "lest she should meet with either of those *impertinent fellows* she saw this morning."

"By all means," said Miss Stanhope, "we shall have no objection to a beau. Will you go, Lady Maria?"

"Oh, no," hastily answered Col. Ross, "Maria is such a timid rider, I beg we may not have the *bore* of her company!"

"I did not intend to intrude upon you," said Lady Maria, suppressing the tears that rose in her eyes, and endeavouring to speak in a gay tone, "but I remember the time when you used to be delighted if I would *condescend* to allow you to *instruct* me in the art of the *manege*."

"My dear Maria, you talk of things that happened a hundred years ago," said the Colonel.

"I can only wish, then," replied his lady, "that instances of the same kindness were more recent!" And, as she spoke, she left the room.

Fanny soon followed, to prepare for her ride, and the Colonel and Miss Stanhope were left *tete-a-tete* for half an hour. With the utmost *finesse*, he endeavoured to persuade Amelia into a belief that the person who rescued Fanny was a man of bad character; pretending that he had a perfect recollection of his person, having seen him tried for the offence he alleged against him.

"All I dread is," said he, "that this artful fellow will presume upon the service he has rendered Fanny, and endeavour to interest her in his favour; the girl is so romantically grateful, that it will not be difficult to accomplish such a scheme, and then, depend upon it, we shall suffer by some unforeseen imposition. Join your influence, then, dear Miss Stanhope, with mine, and help to frighten Fanny out of her good opinion."

"If you had not made such a parade about this story," replied Amelia, "perhaps I should have been on your side, but, now you seem to set your heart upon it, I shall disappoint you, for I love contradiction, so expect to see me on the opposition benches when the matter comes before the House."

Col. Ross laughed in apparent good humour, but he devoutly wished his fair friend at New York for her perverseness.

When Fanny had put on her riding-habit, she returned to the breakfast-parlour, and Miss Stanhope's carriage conveyed the trio to the spot where the grooms were waiting with the horses.

The animal Amelia rode was very spirited, and she frequently expressed her fears that he would be too much for her skill to manage. Fanny, who was the better horse-woman, offered to change with her friend; but the Colonel endeavoured to persuade her not to venture such a hazardous undertaking, but rather to return to

The Horse taken Fright with Fanny.

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the carriage, and defer the ride until another day, when a safer horse could be provided for Miss Stanhope. The giddy Amelia refused to listen to this salutary advice, however; and as Fanny repeated her offer, the exchange was made. For some time the fiery animal seemed to submit to the superior skill of his new manager, and all went smoothly on, until the sudden elevation of a boy's kite startled him, and, darting forward with fury, he presently left his companions far behind him.

Terror deprived Fanny of all power to check his speed, and, losing her balance, she was thrown to the ground, with a violence that stunned her, and when Col. Ross and Miss Stanhope came up to her, they found her lying, apparently lifeless, in the arms of a gentleman, who had stopped his carriage when he saw the accident, and flown to her assistance.

For the first few minutes they were too much absorbed in terror to observe the countenance of Fanny's supporter; but when, after the application of cold water to her temples, she revived, and assured her friends that she was not materially hurt, Miss Stanhope instantly recognised, in the features of the gentleman who had assisted Fanny, too strong a resemblance to the Duke of Albemarle, to be in doubt of his identity.

Though only a boy of fourteen when she had last seen him, the peculiar cast of his countenance was too remarkable to be mistaken, and she had soon the satisfaction of observing, that she had the advantage over her intended husband, and was convinced that her own form had undergone a more material alteration in the space of seven years than his had done, since he appeared not to have the slightest idea who she was.

CHAPTER XI.

A Hoax!

The Duke of Albemarle, for it was really him, offered his carriage to convey Fanny home, but Amelia replied, "that, as *Miss Stanhope's own* carriage would be there immediately, there was no occasion to intrude upon his politeness." A groom had been sent in search of the coach, which had conveyed the ladies as far as the Edgeware Road, and it was but a very little while before it made its appearance.

The Duke instantly recognised the arms, and became the dupe of Miss Stanhope's artifice, by mistaking Fanny for his bride elect; a hoax Amelia had determined upon playing him as soon as she found herself unknown to him.

The Duke assisted Fanny to the carriage, and then took his leave, without taking any notice of the discovery he thought he had made, and proceeded to Town, full of the most pleasing anticipations of happiness, in his approaching union with a girl of such exquisite beauty, as the one he had just been admiring.

He retained but a very slight recollection of the infantine grace that had been presented to him as his future wife, before he left England, and could only remember that he thought her a *pretty girl*, although there was certainly nothing in her appearance that promised such a full harvest of perfection as that he had just been contemplating.

Lord Somertown's house was to be the Duke's town residence, until he should be able to fix

upon one to his mind, and he alighted there in the highest spirits imaginable, in about half an hour after he had parted with Fanny.

His uncle was pleased to see him so cheerful, as the Duke's last letter had been written in a style of despondency, that showed he was not very sanguine in his expectations of happiness in his approaching marriage.

When the Duke related the accident that had brought him acquainted with Miss Stanhope, Lord Somertown was still better pleased, as the description he gave of the impression her beauty had made upon his fancy was in the true style of a lover. "When I saw the lovely creature thrown from her horse," said his Grace, "terror was the instinctive emotion of my heart; but little did I imagine how deeply my own happiness was concerned in her safety. Thank heaven," added he, "the sweet girl, though greatly frightened, was not hurt."

"Well, well, boy," answered Lord Somertown, "I am glad it is as it is, for it would have been an inconvenient thing if the girl had been killed *before* you had married her; her fortune is very necessary to the repair of yours, as that long Chancery-suit with the *pretended* heir to your title cost an immensity of money. I am glad you like the *doll* so well, too, as that will make the matrimonial pill go down easier. For my part, I think all the girls of fashion are exactly alike, now-a-days; they all resemble *walking-sticks* in their shapes, and French puppets in their faces; their dress consists of exactly enough drapery to attract one's eye, whilst it is sufficiently scanty and transparent to shock one's modesty; and there is so much unmeaning frippery in their conversation, and so little delicacy or good sense in their conduct, that I am convinced that the man who marries for *love*, in these days, must be either a *boy* or a *dotard*."

"Your Lordship's picture of female excellence is not very inviting," said the Duke.

"*Female excellence!*" rejoined Lord Somertown, "why there is no such thing; but, however, I do not wish to set you against the potion you are *obliged* to swallow; you will find out its *bitterness* time enough. Apropos! who was with Miss Stanhope, in her unlucky excursion, this morning?"

"A lady and a gentleman," replied the Duke.

"The *lady*, I dare say, I can guess at, for she has picked up an *adventress*, who is making a good thing out of her, and I hope the first act of your power, when you marry Miss Stanhope, will be to break that connection. I hope the *gentleman* was not a rival, though; girls are such vain creatures, that they cannot live without an admirer, and I have began to be afraid, for some time past, that you would stay so long abroad, that some needy fellow would snatch up the prize before you returned."

"I heard the young lady who was with Miss Stanhope call the gentleman Col. Ross," said the Duke.

"Oh, then, all is well," rejoined Lord Somertown; "Col. Ross is *married*, so there are no fears from that quarter."

"I am glad to hear it," said the Duke, "for there was so much anxiety painted on his countenance, that I could almost have ventured to believe that he was an admirer of the lady who had met the accident. But, my dear uncle, you talk of Miss Stanhope's marrying some *needy man*, as if her fortune was at her own disposal. I thought her father's will insisted upon her marrying me, on the penalty of losing the bulk of her fortune; and that *I* was bound by a similar injunction to marry none but Amelia."

"A mere fairy tale, invented by my ingenuity," rejoined Lord Somertown, "to make you both

cement the union I have set my heart upon: as you have fallen in love with the girl, I may venture to disclose the secret to *you*, but I beg you will guard it carefully from Amelia, on whose docility we must not rely a single instant, after that restraint is taken off."

"Deceive her no longer, I entreat you," said the Duke; "to be the object of Miss Stanhope's *unrestrained* choice would make me happier than I can express, and how can I ever know that I am so, whilst she acts under the influence of the supposed clause in her father's will?"

"I did not imagine you were such an idiot, Henry," exclaimed Lord Somertown, angrily; "you talk of things that never existed. No woman ever had an unbiassed choice in a husband. They are influenced by vanity, avarice, or ambition, and sometimes by all *three*. When you know as much of the sex as *I* do, you will despise them as completely as *I* do. There is no animal so perverse as a headstrong girl; trust not your happiness to her keeping, therefore. I have confided my secret to you, and, if you betray it, I will find a method of revenging the affront. You ought to know me, Henry," continued Lord Somertown, looking sternly at the Duke. "I have done *much* to be revenged of those who scorned my power, and *you* have benefited by it: take care, therefore, how you incur my displeasure; no one ever yet did so with *impunity*. *You know* the ties of blood are nothing in my estimation, when opposed to excited *vengeance*. Remember that, and tremble! I leave your mode of acting to yourself, after this caution."

The Duke shuddered as he listened to this exordium, for he well understood his uncle's allusion; and he would gladly have given his title and estate to be freed from the unpleasant sensations, the recollections it awakened excited in

his bosom. He knew, however, the vindictive temper of Lord Somertown too well to hazard the slightest contradiction.

"Where my duty and my inclination go hand-in-hand," said his Grace, "there is little fear of my disobeying your lordship's injunctions: to marry Miss Stanhope is the most ardent wish of my heart: that I should do so is your lordship's: I shall not, therefore, risk the possibility of a disappointment, by divulging the important secret."

CHAPTER XII.

A Hoax.

In the mean time, Miss Stanhope and Fanny returned to town; the former full of spirits and drollery, secretly exulting in the imposition she had practised, of which, however, she avoided giving the slightest hint to either of her companions, fearing lest they should impede the success of her plot, before she had an opportunity of laying its foundation with the security she meditated, and which, once put in train, she felt certain would defy their genius to overturn.

Fanny's spirits were flurried with the accident she had met with, and she was but ill able to bear the raillery with which her lively friend attacked her.

"My dear Fanny," said Amelia, "I really think it would be the safest expedient we could hit upon, to send you into the country immediately."

"And why so?" asked Col. Ross, for Fanny was silent.

"Why, don't you perceive," rejoined Miss Stanhope, "that she can neither walk nor ride without meeting with adventures and knight-errants. Depend upon it she will be run away with some day, and then we shall lament the temerity that exposed her to such danger."

Col. Ross bit his lips. It was a suggestion his own anxious heart had often presented to his fancy, but he did not dare to avow it. "Now, don't you think it very likely to happen?" continued Miss Stanhope, looking archly; "*you* were afraid of the Adonis she met in the morning, but *I* have the most reason to be afraid now, for I will wager a thousand guineas she steals my lover from me before I am a week older."

"Your lover!" re-echoed the Colonel; "for Heaven's sake, Miss Stanhope, who do you allude to?"

"To the Duke of Albemarle," replied she; "that was the invincible knight who just now spread his fostering arms to shelter this beautiful damsel."

As Miss Stanhope spoke, Fanny's cheeks were dyed with crimson, and a deep sigh escaped her. An indistinct feeling, like disappointment, shot through her heart. She was sorry to hear that the stranger she had thought so agreeable was a man of whom she must think of no more. She tried, however, to turn the conversation, by observing, "that she wondered the Duke had not recognised Miss Stanhope."

"I dare say," answered Amelia, laughing, "that the Duke thinks me so much improved in beauty, that he does not suspect his happiness in being destined to so lovely a creature, and so his *humility* painted out a fair one more upon a

par with his own merits. Well, never mind, my dear, I will not pull caps with you. The Duke does not please me, but I shall not say so. Let him cry out first. A few thousands per annum will be a trifling sacrifice in the cause for which Mark Anthony lost the *world*."

In this unmerciful manner did Amelia continue to roast poor Fanny, until the carriage stopped at Col. Ross's door, and, for the first time since they had become acquainted, Fanny felt rejoiced to get rid of her agreeable friend, who could not command time enough to alight to tell Lady Maria Ross "The *wonders* of the *ride*," a circumstance she lamented most pathetically.

Col. Ross was as glad as Fanny to see Amelia depart, for the tempest of jealousy her suggestions had raised in his bosom required the retirement of his closet to subdue and bring within the limits of his usual self-command. To his closet, therefore, he flew as soon as he entered the house, and Fanny repaired to her own chamber, where, throwing herself on her bed, she gave way to the flood of tears that had long been struggling for freedom. She had suppressed them whilst in Amelia's presence, because she feared she would attribute their flowing to a silly and sudden partiality imbibed by a *first-sight* impression, a species of romance Fanny had always condemned, when conversing with Miss Stanhope upon the subject of attachment.

Scarcely, indeed, could she herself tell from whence the weeping propensity originated, but felt most inclined to attribute it to the influence of her wounded pride, which had shrunk from Miss Stanhope's raillery, with a degree of pain very unusual to the naturally humble-minded Fanny.

"Poor outcast orphan, as I am," said the weeping girl, "dependant on the bounty of strangers,

and unblest even with a *name*. My nature assimilates not with such degrading circumstances. I feel no innate symptoms of baseness: why then should I be trampled upon by those whose fortunes are better, although their sentiments may be inferior to mine? Miss Stanhope is blest with fortune, and its sure attendants—*friends*. She can command admirers; it is ungenerous, therefore, in her, to make my insignificance the subject of her amusement."

These reflections were the bitterest Fanny had ever made; the secret cause that made them so, I leave to my sagacious *female* readers to find out; not in the least doubting that they will be able to ascribe the effect to its genuine cause; and with those who are clear-sighted enough to unravel the mystery, I flatter myself poor Fanny will stand acquitted of *habitual* ill-humour. A little acrimony may surely be excused on so trying an occasion.

In a few hours after Miss Stanhope's return home, she received a note from the Duke of Albemarle, announcing his arrival, and entreating permission to pay his compliments in person to the lady who held his future happiness at her disposal?

Amelia answered the note, and fixed the following morning for receiving the visit of the *impatient lover*. The Duke thought this interval an *age*, but he was forced to submit, and the mischievous Amelia enjoyed the double pleasure of reflecting on his present suspense, and approaching disappointment. When the appointed hour arrived, the Duke was announced, and entered the apartment where Amelia was sitting at her music with such a degree of eagerness, that he scarcely gave the servant time to name him 'ere he stood before her. His impatience, however, was not more evident than his disappointment,

when, on Amelia's rising to receive him, he perceived that she was not the lady he had expected to see. The words he had begun to speak faltered on his tongue, and he stopped short in the middle of a fine speech, to the diversion of his cruel mistress, and the inexpressible confusion of his own feelings.

The Duke was accompanied by Lord Somertown: he did not, therefore, dare to account for his embarrassment, and that nobleman attributed it solely to the foolishness inseparable from a boy's attachment. The Marquis of Petersfield soon entered the room, and relieved him, in some degree, by turning the conversation upon general subjects.

After some little discussion of the politics and news of the day, Lord Somertown asked the Marquis whether he had purchased the pictures at Christie's, which he saw him bidding for.

"I have," replied Lord Petersfield, "and if your lordship will do me the favour to give your opinion of a Titian I have amongst the number, it will greatly oblige me?"

"Certainly," answered Lord Somertown, "let us look at it directly. The young people," added he, nodding significantly, "will *excuse* our leaving them together for a few minutes." So saying, the two guardians left the room, and the Duke's embarrassment returned with increased violence. Miss Stanhope, who enjoyed her poor lover's confusion, determined to increase it. "I little thought," said she, smiling archly, "when I received such polite attention from your Grace yesterday morning, after my unfortunate fall, that it was to the Duke of Albemarle I was indebted for assistance; but your Grace seems to have forgotten the whole circumstance, for you have not once enquired how I am after my *fright*."

The Duke was struck dumb at this speech; he

mechanically put his hand to his eyes, as if to ascertain whether they were *really* his own eyes; and Miss Stanhope burst into a fit of laughter, that completely disconcerted him.

"It is time," said she, "to finish the joke. I perceive your Grace's distress, which is, indeed, an awkward one; and, although I have been mischievous enough to enjoy it for a little while, I cannot find it in my heart to protract it any longer. I have entered most unwillingly into the deceit that is practised upon you, and I feel myself unequal to the task of imposing any longer upon your credulity: I will, therefore, be candid, provided your Grace will pledge your word and honour that you will not own I have done so, until *I* give you leave."

The Duke, whose curiosity was raised to the highest pitch by this preamble, and whose hopes began to revive at the same time, readily entered into the conditional promise, and Miss Stanhope proceeded with her *hoax*.

"Amelia Stanhope," said she, "is a whimsical creature; for, although I love her dearly, nobody is quicker in discovering her errors than I am. This giddy girl could not bear the idea of being introduced to her husband elect, as a commodity he was obliged to take whether he liked or not, and having read in some novel, I suppose, of the metamorphosis of lovers, to render themselves more amiable in the sight of those they wished to please, she determined to get up a little drama, which was to be performed in honour of your Grace's arrival. In this piece *I* have the principal part, for I am honoured by personating Miss Stanhope, whilst she herself has assumed the simple guise which belongs to me, and which you will see her perform with admirable grace and *naivete*. In that disguise she expects to win your Grace's heart, and, if I have

any skill in augury, her expectations are not ill-founded Lord Somertown and the Marquis are both in the secret, and they are anticipating the pleasure of seeing your embarrassment, when you find yourself entangled in an attachment so seemingly contrary to their wishes, and which the *denouement* of the piece is to dissipate in the prettiest manner imaginable. The moment I saw your Grace enter the room this morning, I recollected your features, and knew you for the gentleman who assisted Miss Stanhope yesterday morning. The hoax I knew, therefore, *must* fall to the ground, and this determined me to tell you of it first, and if you have half a grain of wit, you will turn the tables upon the authors of it, by appearing to believe things as they represent them, and acquiescing in their wishes as to the proposed alliance; this will secretly mortify them, whilst you can assure Amelia's good will by clandestine testimonies of your admiration; and, by private marriage with her under her borrowed character, you can put the most romantic finish to the whole affair. Rest assured of my assistance, provided you keep the secret; and, when you have seen the *pretended* Fanny, you will be better able to tell me *how far* you will like to proceed under *my* directions."

It is impossible to describe the astonishment and delight that filled the Duke's mind, as Amelia laid her pretended scheme before him; but, although he wondered, he did not doubt. He readily, therefore, promised to act under the direction of his treacherous guide, who in return assured him, that he should see the *real* Miss Stanhope that night, if he would meet them at the Opera.

The arrangement was but just made when the two Lords returned, and the Duke soon afterwards took his leave, saying, as he quitted the

room, "at the Opera, then, madam, I shall hope to renew the pleasure I have enjoyed this morning." Amelia nodded assent, and the lover departed, accompanied by Lord Somertown; neither of them dreaming of the trick Miss Stanhope had been playing.

She, however, was so diverted with the thoughts of it, and so delighted with the success which had crowned her first attempts, that she was in perfect ecstacies, and could scarcely perform the duties of her toilet, for laughing at the frolic.

CHAPTER XIII.

Cross Purposes.

As the Duke and Lord Somertown returned together in the carriage, the latter said, with a smile, "And do you really think the impression you have received *indelible?* Do you believe your heart *invincible* to any other attachment?"

"My heart," replied the Duke, "must be very deceitful, if it has not received a lasting impression. I *think* I shall not *easily* change."

"I am glad you speak *dubiously* upon the subject," answered Lord Somertown, laughing; "it shows you are less of the *blockhead* than I took you to be, from your *first* rhapsody. I wish you to marry Miss Stanhope, but I don't think it necessarily follows that you should make a *fool* of yourself!"

The Duke smiled, but he made no reply. He attributed Lord Somertown's asperity, not to his natural morose disposition, but to the particular mortification he felt at supposing he, the Duke,

admired the *fictitious*, instead of the *real*, Miss Stanhope.

Nothing more, however, passed on the subject between them; and the Duke passed the hours that intervened between that and the Opera in arranging his plans respecting the double part he was to act, so as to keep up the *farce* of attention to the *pretender*, and yet satisfy the rightful sovereign that he was devoted to her alone.

In the mean time Miss Stanhope called upon Fanny, to entreat her to accompany her to the Opera, and spend a few days with her at the Marquis of Petersfield's. Fanny did not appear much inclined to join the party; but, after a little persuasion, and a good deal of raillery upon her *sudden* predilection for solitude, she yielded to her lively friend, and promised to make one in the Marchioness of Petersfield's box that evening, and accompany Amelia home for a few days, provided the scheme was approved by Lady Maria Ross, who was also of the party; and about *half-past nine* they entered the Opera-House.

The poor Duke had been there ever since the opening of the doors, devoutly cursing the fashionable folly, which rendered it vulgar to see the beginning of any public exhibition.

His Grace was in the pit, with his eyes fixed on that part of the gay hemisphere where he expected the rising of the star he worshipped. No sooner had he recognised the entrance of the party, than he flew to join them.

Miss Stanhope received his compliments with a smile, and, turning to Fanny, begged leave to introduce her *friend* to his Grace.

"*Miss Fanny*," said she, emphatically, "I *would* add another name if I *could*, but I must leave that for your Grace's ingenuity to supply in what manner you please." The latter part of

this was spoken in a low voice, and the arch smile that accompanied it, convinced the Duke that Amelia alluded to her own assumed character.

The admiration the Duke had felt at the first interview with Fanny was increased at this moment: there was a dignity in her look and manner he had not before observed, and the expression that beamed from her beautiful eyes was calculated to awe as well as to enchant.

The cause of this change, in the usual appearance of Fanny, which generally gave the idea of feminine softness, rather than dignity, originated in the peculiarity of her feelings respecting the Duke.

His appearance had struck her as the most agreeable she had ever seen, before she knew who he was; and when she learnt the disagreeable truth, she instantly determined to subdue the slight partiality she felt. Miss Stanhope's raillery had roused her pride, and her promise not to "pull caps" with her for the Duke, seemed to imply, that she thought Fanny would be glad to attract his Grace's notice, if she could do it with impunity. "I wish not to interfere with Amelia's lovers," thought she, "and she shall see that the Duke is not an object to excite my ambition."

Full of these proud resolutions, Fanny's eyes wore a look of *hauteur*, very different from their usual expression; yet was the change an improvement, as it gave a spirit to her beauty that rendered it more striking and impressive.

Deep blushes mantled on her cheeks as the Duke paid his compliments to her, but the coldness with which she turned away from him, the moment he had done speaking, mortified, though it tended to increase, his passion.

In vain did the Duke endeavour to engage her in conversation; her laconic answers, politely

but coldly given, still terminated every subject he started.

In the coffee-room, after the Opera was over Lord Somertown joined the party, and the Duke's attention to Fanny was not lost upon that nobleman. "The boy is a fool," said he, mentally, "and ready to fall in love with every school-girl he meets with. A few hours ago he was dying for Miss Stanhope, and now the idiot is worshiping a new divinity; but I know *boys* too well to notice their folly. Opposition only gives fire to romantic love; the spark will go out of itself, if the breath of contradiction does not fan it into flames."

The next day the Duke of Albemarle paid Miss Stanhope an early visit. "What an amiable creature are you, my dear madam," said he, "in showing such compassion to me. Had you left me in ignorance on this trying occasion, my sufferings would have been insupportable."

"It is plain you think me very *amiable*," replied Amelia, laughing, "when you confess so candidly to my face that the bare idea of being united to me would have been insupportable to you. But if Jove forgave the *perjuries* of lovers, surely mere mortals may pardon their *rudeness*."

"Nay," interrupted the Duke, "you wrong me, madam, and wrest my words from their real meaning. I did not say the idea of marrying you would be insupportable; it was my *suspense* respecting the object of my choice that I exclaimed against; and as that choice, as sudden as it is ardent, was made before I had ever looked at you, surely the shadow of offence cannot be imputed to me."

"Tolerably well turned," answered Miss Stanhope; "but tell me, my Lord, candidly, supposing all that I have told you should be proved a mere fabrication of my own brain, how would you be

inclined to act? Would you play Mark Anthony, or Shylock? Would you throw away the world for love, or insist upon your *bond?*"

The Duke started—he did not like the suggestion; it gave rise to doubts that had not before tormented him, and he knew not what to answer. Amelia saw his confusion, and enjoyed it.

"I'll tell you what," said she, "I am afraid you are too luke-warm a lover for Amelia Stanhope; she is romance personified, and the man who would not run away with her, at the risk of never possessing a shilling of her fortune, will never marry her, you may depend upon it."

"The man who could think of *fortune*, when put in competition with the possession of *Miss Stanhope*, would be unworthy such a prize!" said the Duke; "but why, dear madam, torment me with queries that involve even your own veracity, as well as my happiness, in clouds of obscurity?"

"I don't know why I started the difficulty," said Miss Stanhope, laughing, "unless it were meant to increase your passion; for, say what you will, there is no stimulus in love equal to difficulty."

"There is a charm in your mischief-loving spirit, that would be dangerous to contemplate," said the Duke, "to a man less a captive than I am. The witchery of your smiles is increased by the mischief that seems to lurk beneath them; and those who most delight to *torment*, would be most likely to feel *pleasure* from the infliction."

"Don't waste your time in complimenting *me*," said Amelia, laughing, "for, betide what will, from *me* you can have no expectations. Had I not been quite *clear* upon that head, I would not have undertaken the part I am playing."

"If, then, you are so clear as what I may hope for from yourself," said the Duke, "deign, dear

madam, to inform me, what are my dependancies with your *friend?*"

"There are few women who can answer for *themselves,*" said Amelia, "and you are unreasonable enough to expect that I should *answer* for my *friend.* I do not give so wide a latitude to the duties of friendship. Thus far I will venture to tell you, if you win Amelia Stanhope, you must possess more merit than is at this moment apparent to your humble servant. Exert *your energies,* therefore, my Lord Duke, and who knows what may happen?"

"Provoking, tantalizing girl!" said the Duke in a tone of impatience; "how can you make an amusement of my sufferings, and laugh at my distress. Surely, such softness of feature was never intended to enshrine a heart so impervious to humanity?"

"A pretty story, truly," exclaimed Amelia, "that I am to be stigmatized with the appellation of *barbarian,* because I do not melt forsooth into sympathetic tears of pity, at the unheard-of sufferings of a man, who, having been *eight-and-forty* hours in love, is still uncertain whether his mistress approves of him or not!!! Thank Heaven, my sensibility does not keep pace with your impetuosity; if it did, my poor nerves would be in a lamentable situation indeed!"

The Duke could not help smiling at the ludicrous turn Amelia gave to his complaints, though he little imagined the full extent of the irony she addressed to him.

"To be serious for a moment, if that indeed be possible," said the Duke, "will my fair instructress condescend to tell me what I am to say to my uncle, when he questions me as to my reception by Miss Stanhope. Am I to report a *gracious* hearing or not?"

"Nay, I leave that to your own discretion,"

replied Amelia, "*I* am the *ostensible* Miss Stanhope, and I am sure *I* have received you very *kindly;* therefore you may safely say so. But I would advise you to throw in a few hints, when you are talking to your uncle, how much you would prefer the *portionless Fanny,* to the rich heiress, provided you could follow your own inclination.

"Lord Somertown will *pretend to reprove* your imprudence, but he will secretly be pleased with your penetration and sound judgment, for he is as eager for the success of the romance as my friend, and quite as *deep* in the *plot.* Suffer all the preliminaries to be settled, just as if you intended to marry Miss Stanhope in her proper character, and then give zest to the joke, run away with her a few days before the one fixed for your nuptials, under the fictitious name of Fatherless Fanny. Oh the story will make the prettiest novel that ever was, and Amelia Stanhope will be better pleased with the *denouement* than any other person!"

"Would to Heaven I were sure of that!" said the Duke, "but the expression of her eyes does not speak so flattering a language."

"Nay, never mind that," replied Amelia, laughing, "for that may be as foreign from the truth as the rest of the plot. 'A faint heart never won a fair lady.' Go on, therefore, and prosper, you have *my* good wishes, and Miss Stanhope's too, or I am mistaken!"

CHAPTER XIV.

The Concert.

Miss Stanhope, without disclosing a tittle of her plot to Fanny, managed it so well, that she

made her act in concert with her. The necessity of meeting the Duke continually was very irksome to Fanny; but Amelia laid her plans so adroitly, that the former could not excuse herself from joining the parties of the latter, without giving the very reason she wished to conceal.

Instead of feeling flattered by the Duke's attentions, as she would have done had she considered herself entitled to receive his addresses, Fanny looked upon them as little short of insult, since the pointed manner in which they were paid her, left her no possibility of mistaking their import.

"To what end," would she say to herself, "does the Duke of Albemarle address himself to *me!* Does he not know that I am acquainted with the nature of his engagement to Miss Stanhope? are they not publicly acknowledged to the world by the preparations that are making for their union? It is true that Amelia professes to dislike the Duke; nay, even affects to ridicule him; but she puts no barrier in the way of his addresses. He is received as her acknowledged lover; and though it is sufficiently evident that there is no love on either side, yet, if, *convenience* be the motive of their union, it will be nevertheless a *marriage*, and therefore renders his addresses to any other woman a gross insult to her delicacy."

While these ideas were passing in Fanny's mind, the Duke, who supposed her a party in a plot to deceive him, and who exulted in the knowledge of that plot, persevered in paying her the most marked attention, still carefully adhering to Miss Stanhope's injunctions not to give a hint of his knowledge of the deception. The Duke, who joined to a person the most engaging, a perfection in the art of pleasing that might have rendered a less handsome man irresistible, was a

general favourite with the ladies, and his attentions to Fanny were not observed without exciting considerable emotions of envy and malice. The *nameless Girl* was already obnoxious to, their hatred from the *eclat* of her beauty, and now they gave vent in the most unequivocal terms, to their rancour and ill-nature. "It was a shame," they said, "that a girl like that should be suffered to rival a young lady of Miss Stanhope's consequence; and they wondered the Marquis of Petersfield and Lord Somertown would allow of such doings; they ought to interpose their authority, and remove a person so unfit for the circles of fashion as Fanny certainly was."

These whispers reached Lord Somertown's ears; and as he had always felt the most decided aversion to poor Fanny, he determined to speak to Col. Ross and Lady Maria on the subject, and try if nothing could be done to get rid of so dangerous a person before the mischief had gone too far. His Lordship recollected, with regret that he had himself betrayed the secret to the Duke respecting his alliance with Miss Stanhope, at a moment when he had been led to imagine that his nephew was as anxious for the match as he was; and by this imprudence the Duke knew that there was no penalty attached to his dereliction from the proposed marriage.

After all the pains Lord Somertown had taken, and the *guilt* he had incurred, to ensure the title of Albemarle to his nephew, the bare idea of his ingratitude was distraction!—Should he marry the nameless portionless girl that seemed now to engross all his attention, Lord Somertown felt that he should scarcely survive the event, since the hatred he felt for the innocent object of his nephew's affection, was as violent as it was undeserved.

From the first moment he had seen the sweet girl, he had hated her; and the expression of his eyes had been so true to the feelings of his soul, that Fanny had felt a terror she could neither account for nor subdue, whenever she had found herself the object of his scrutiny.

The Duke of Albemarle had been in England now about two months, and it was daily expected that his Grace's nuptials would be shortly fixed with the rich Miss Stanhope, whilst the busy circle that reported these conjectures never failed to add, that, "*the divine friendship*" that subsisted between Amelia and Fanny, would be a source of *much pleasure* to the *Duke*, whenever the union took place: and as, no doubt, *all* parties were *agreed*, it might prove a happy *compact*.

The only persons who heard nothing of these whispers, were those most concerned in their import,—the *trio* themselves. That they were the objects of particular observation they could not fail of being conscious; but this they attributed to the celebrity of Miss Stanhope's fortune, and approaching nuptials.

At a concert, one evening, however, the buz was more than usually active; and Fanny who was more particularly the object of ill-natured observation, felt the painful impression of the whisper in circulation. Her nature, delicate and modest, shrunk from the general stare, and sufferings the most exquisite were painted on her intelligent countenance.

Not so, Miss Stanhope; she with her accustomed liveliness, was listening to the nonsense of Sir Everard Mornington, a young man of dashing celebrity, who, besides being a member of the Four-in-Hand Club, was the epitome of every thing ridiculous in the long list of fashionable folly. His fortune was large, and his person

handsome, and therefore even those people who had sense enough to laugh at his foibles, pretended to tolerate them in consideration of his extreme good nature and generosity. In Miss Stanhope's eyes, however, he rose above toleration, for she doated upon eccentricity, and her ear was charmed by the frequent repetitions of those *elegant* phrases *prime* and *bang-up*, and the rest of that unintelligible *slang* which has lately been substituted for good sense and good breeding. The relation of his exploits of the Olympic art of charioteering, was more interesting to her feelings than she could possibly have found in the annals of the most distinguished conquerors. Sir Everard was not insensible to the honour of Miss Stanhope's approbation; and from the first evening of their acquaintance, he had determined that she alone, of all the girls he knew, black, brown, or fair, should sit beside him on the *dickey*, when he drove to the temple of hymen. The *slight* difficulty of a *prior-engagement* was nothing to his magnanimous soul. "There was but little merit," he said, "in winning a race where all the competitors started fair; but to overtake and *overturn* a seemingly successful rival, would be *prime* and *bang-up* with a vengeance!"

The Duke had been conversing with Fanny, at the beginning of the entertainment, and paying her those thousand delicate and nameless attentions which mark so well the affection of the heart. Fanny had received them, as she always did, with the most frigid coldness. When a delicate mind feels it necessary to struggle with a growing partiality for an object every way calculated to render the task difficult, the effort is made with all the fervour of determined virtue, and no outward symptom betrays the struggle within. The Duke felt piqued at her indifference, and began

to think whether he had not been deceived by his informer, when he was taught to suppose she had cherished a wish to enslave him.

Full of these thoughts he had quitted Fanny's side, and wandered to the opposite side of the room.

Lady Maria Ross, who sat on the other side of Fanny, was engaged in deep conversation with some ladies near her, and the poor girl was left exposed to the whispers and the observations of the surrounding ladies, as we just now related, a situation of whose disagreeables she was by no means insensible.

Absorbed in her own unpleasant reflections, she did not observe that a gentleman had taken the seat next her, which the Duke had just left, until his voice addressing her, roused her from her reverie.

"Once more," said he, in a tone, which Fanny instantly knew to be the voice of the stranger, whose politeness had rescued her from insult, in the Park, on the morning of her well-remembered walk; "once more I am so happy as to meet with the sweet girl, whose image has lived in my heart ever since the first moment I beheld her. Yet mistake me not, gentle lady," continued he, speaking more softly, "I am no lover come to offer the incense of flattery at the shrine of beauty. That passion is for ever extinct in this bosom; it is buried in the tomb of her you resemble. The offering I bring you is friendship the most sublime; such love as guardian angels feel for those they watch over. Deign then to listen to my warning voice:—temptation, and danger, nay, even death itself, appear to threaten you; refuse not then the friend that heaven itself has sent."

It is impossible to describe the variety of emotions that filled the bosom of Fanny as she listen-

ed to this strange address. The most predominant was fear: terrified at perceiving that she was observed more than ever, her first impulse was to fly; and she was rising from her seat, unconscious of the action, when she felt the stranger's hand laid upon her arm to prevent her removal, and she mechanically re-seated herself.

"You seem to fear observation," said he, in a gentle voice, "and yet you were about to excite it in the most imprudent manner. Sit still, sweet girl, and be not afraid of the only friend this room contains for you."

There was a charm in the voice of the stranger that had a powerful effect upon the heart of Fanny; she had felt it the first time he spoke to her, and it seemed to increase rather than diminish in the repetition.

She raised her timid eyes to his face, and wondered at the delight that thrilled through her frame, as she read affection in those of the persuasive speaker. She immediately checked the emotion, and endeavoured to recover her serenity, but she could only *look* composed; the feelings of her mind were not to be subdued. The penetrating eye of the stranger perceived the struggle, and again addressed her.

"I am impelled towards you, lovely girl," said he, "by an interest as undefinable as it is irresistible. I observe with pleasure that you participate in my feelings, although the sympathy is involuntary. The instinct of the soul is incapable of error; I am persuaded, therefore, that we shall one day be satisfied why we experience the emotions that now agitate us both."

Fanny continued silent during the whole of this address; for she feared to trust her voice, lest its tremulous sound should betray her agitation. She did not feel so well assured that it was the effect

of divine inspiration, and therefore choose rather to check than encourage it.

She had been combating the rising partiality that had been awakened in her bosom by the Duke of Albermarle, and she could not help feeling both surprised and provoked that a person, of whose very name she was ignorant, and whom she had seen but once before, should be able to excite sentiments of tenderness in her heart, far superior to any she had ever before experienced, and which, although they bore no resemblance to the partiality she felt for the Duke, were so new and undefinable, that she trembled to admit them.

"I perceive," said the stranger, observing that Fanny's reverie was both deep and painful, "I perceive that the abruptness of my address has alarmed your delicacy; but fear not, sweet girl, I repeat, *I am no lover;* consider me as a monitor and friend, and listen to my admonitions: You are surrounded by treachery: beware of the Duke of Albemarle: beware of Col. Ross; but above all beware of Lord Somertown."

Fanny turned pale. "Good Heaven," exclaimed she, "what danger threatens me? The people of whom you warn me are *nothing* to me. Why then should I fear them? Explain your mysterious caution, I implore you: for it terrifies without instructing me."

"Explanation *here* is impossible," replied the stranger, "but meet me in the park where I first saw you, to-morrow morning, and I will reveal the mystery that perplexes you."

"Meet a stranger by appointment," said Fanny, colouring with indignation, "it is *you, Sir,* I ought to *fear,* who advise me so imprudently;" and rising from her seat as she spoke, she quitted the side of the stranger, and immediately

joined Miss Stanhope, who had just beckoned her to come to her. "You are a pretty Miss, indeed," said she, laughing, as Fanny approached her, "two conquests in an evening is too much." "How *two* conquests," repeated Fanny, "I do not understand you?" "Oh! I will enlighten your understanding, my dear—you have been first flirting with the Duke of Albemarle, and now I have caught you coqueting with the rich Mr. Hamilton."

"Mr. Hamilton!" said Fanny, "is the gentleman who has just been talking to me named Hamilton?" "Yes, my dear, do you like the name better than Albemarle?"

"Oh, no," said Fanny, *naively*, "I only repeated the name because the house Lady Ellincourt purchased in Yorkshire, belonged to a Mr. Hamilton, and I have always had my thoughts about that house."

"Well, and now I suppose you will have your *own* thoughts about its late master," said Miss Stanhope, "for that gentleman in black is he. The late Mr. Hamilton left his immense fortune to him on the condition of his taking his name; —he met him abroad, and took a fancy to him for some of his winning ways that seems to have charmed you, for I hear he was no relation to him. There's a history for you, my dear, so now let's have your part of the romance, has he been making love to you? he looked mighty *sweet*, methinks."

"No, indeed!" said Fanny, "he has not been making love to me: but do you know he is the stranger I met with in Hyde Park, that morning when Colonel Ross was so angry with me: and he is the person that Col. Ross said was a *swindler*."

"Charming, charming," rejoined Miss Stanhope, "the plot thickens. Well! my dear, I like the story vastly, and you shall marry which you like, the Duke or Mr. Hamilton."

"It is ridiculous to talk of marrying either," replied Fanny, in a tone of vexation.

„It is not so ridiculous as you may choose to think it," interrupted Miss Stanhope, "for I have the most unquestionable authority for asserting that the Duke of Albemarle is in love with you."

Amelia raised her voice a little as she pronounced the latter part of her speech, and Lord Somertown's ear caught the important information it conveyed, as he was approaching in order to speak to her. It was enough to rouse all the demons within him, and turning upon his heel, he sought for Col. Ross, to whom he merely said, that "he wished for a private conference with him, the next morning, on a subject of importance, and begged to know whether he would do him the honor of receiving him to breakfast with him."

The Colonel said "he was disengaged, and would certainly expect his Lordship at the hour appointed." Lord Somertown bowed, and immediately quitted Colonel Ross for the purpose of more strictly observing Fanny.

The result of this observation was not pleasing to him, for he had soon the pain of seeing the Duke of Albemarle resume his place beside her, and Lord Somertown had been too long an inhabitant of the world to remain any longer ignorant of his nephew's sentiments respecting her.

Fury flashed from his eye, as conviction shot through his heart, and the emotion was so strong, that the following words escaped his clinched teeth, as his terrible glance fell upon the object of his hatred:—Base worm! thou shalt perish for daring to oppose *my* wishes.

His rage was changed into horror, however, when a voice, close to his ear, exclaimed in an awful tone—"*Thou* too art *perishable*, frail mortal! *thy* power is limited, *thy* days are numbered——

beware then how thou threatenest another! an eye observes thee that thou dreamest not of.''

A cold shiver ran through Lord Somertown's frame, as he listened to accents too well remembered: scarcely did he dare to turn his head, lest he should behold a face the voice had too fatally recalled. But curiosity is an impulse more powerful than fear itself. Agitated as he was, with horror and dismay, he could not resist the eager dictates of that arbitrary power, and his eye involuntarily sought the person who had uttered the terrific words: it caught a glimpse of his retiring form, and, as if blasted by the view, instantly closed, his limbs stiffened, and he fell on the ground; the surrounding company were terrified at this catastrophe, though unconscious of its cause. Lord Somertown was raised from the ground, and conveyed into an adjoining apartment, medical assistance sent for, and an *apoplectic fit* was the name given to the visitation of *remorse.*

The confusion this accident occasioned put an end to the concert. The company hastily called for their carriages, and retired; all except those immediately connected with his lordship. They staid and witnessed his recovery from the stupor into which an accusing conscience had plunged him; they saw his wildly staring eyes, as he cast them around the room, in search of the spectre that had alarmed him; and listened with horror to his incoherent allusions to scenes of former guilt and cruelty.

The Duke of Albemarle, however, finding that his uncle uttered expressions that too plainly told that all was not right within, proposed his being removed to his own house, and as the physician pronounced that it might be done with safety, his lordship was supported to his carriage in the arms of his servants; and by that conveyed

to where he was put to bed. His pillow, swelling with down, received his aching head; the rich drapery that hung round his bed shaded his dim eyes from the tapers that burnt on his table, and busy attendants crowded around him to prevent his wishes.

But, alas! repose was not to be found within the sumptuous apartment—no down could administer the sweets of rest to a disturbed conscience; and although the silken hangings might exclude the blaze of waxen tapers, they could not shelter the mind's eye from the bright flame of conviction that awakened busy memory, and bid her inflict tortures which could neither be borne nor eluded. The ready domestic, however, willing to anticipate his Lord's wishes, could not present him with the only cordial his fevered lip pouted for—the water of oblivion, whose friendly powers might teach him to forget his guilt, and thereby escape the remorse that harrowed up his soul, and filled him with unutterable anguish.

CHAPTER XV.

A Morning Visit.

Alas! why does not remorse induce repentance? Too often we find it has a contrary effect, stirring up in the soul, poisoned by guilt, sentiments of fury and revenge instead of contrition and amendment. Lord Somertown was torn by

the recollection of the deeds of cruelty and injustice he had been guilty of; yet, instead of wishing to atone for his guilt, or making restitution to the injured parties as far as circumstances would admit of, his malicious spirit panted to commit more outrages, and although struggling as it were in the agony of death, he seemed to wish a prolongation of his life merely to use it for the destruction of others.

His ear had convinced him that a being still existed of whose death he had long thought himself certain; and the tempest of passions that conviction awakened in his soul, gave energy to his debilitated frame, and roused him from the lethargy into which terror had plunged him, when first the surprise assailed him.

"I *will* live," said the furious Earl, raising himself in his bed with an energy that astonished his attendants, "I *will* live, for I have much to accomplish before I die."

Supported by the fervour which had seized his mind, Lord Somertown was able to keep his appointment the ensuing morning, with Col. Ross, who felt a surprise bordering on incredulity, when the man he had thought dying the preceding evening was introduced into his library, and he beheld his erect carriage and ardent eye, in neither of which remained a single vestige of indisposition.

"I feel both rejoiced and astonished," exclaimed the Colonel, as he placed his noble visitor in an arm chair, "to see your Lordship, so wonderfully recovered from the illness that alarmed us all so greatly last night."

"Weak minds," replied his Lordship, "are apt to yield to the slightest stroke of sickness, but mine is not cast in that mould, Colonel. The business which has brought me hither, is important to the *dignity* of my family, and forcible indeed

must have been that power which could have tempted me to defer it. Your high character for politeness, Colonel, induces me to hope that you will give me the information I require, and, perhaps, subsequent circumstances may induce you to lend your assistance to the forwarding of my views in an affair of much moment."

The Colonel bowed, and Lord Somertown proceeded: "You have a *girl* under your care who is a perfect enigma: would you, Sir, inform me who she really is?"

"That is not in my power, my Lord," replied Col. Ross, "my ignorance on that subject is as profound as your Lordship's."

"Astonishing!" rejoined Lord Somertown; "is not Lady Maria better informed?"

"I assure your Lordship with truth," said the Colonel, "that neither Maria nor myself know the least tittle concerning the person you allude to, excepting that she is a foundling, and is called Fanny. She has no surname, nor do I believe the poor girl is any wiser on this subject than ourselves."

"If it be not impertinent," said Lord Somertown, "may I ask what motive could induce people of rank, like Col. Ross and Lady Maria, to make a person so obscure the inmate of their house, and to introduce her in parties where her doubtful origin must be a source of pain to herself, and resentment to those who feel their dignity insulted by having such a person obtruding upon them. But, perhaps, the romantic spirit of these novel-reading times suggested the probability that the girl might be some princess in disguise, fled from her persecutors, to take refuge in a land of benevolence and philanthropy."

"Indeed!" replied Colonel Ross, "we never gave ourselves the trouble of conjecturing who the girl might be, but merely took her under our care

at the request of Lady Dowager Ellincourt, who is a relation and very intimate friend of my wife's."

"Lady Dowager Ellincourt! repeated Lord Somertown, and his lip quivered with stifled rage. "If she be an *eleve* of Lady Ellincourt's, there is every thing to be expected from her which intrigue and artifice can accomplish. I mortally hate that woman!" continued his Lordship, knitting his brow, "and the babbling fool her son is even more intolerable than herself; but this has nothing to do with the business before us. Are you aware, Colonel, of the mischief your mistaken condescension to this beggar's brat has occasioned?"

"No, my Lord," replied Colonel Ross, "I never yet supposed her of consequence enough to become the source of mischief to any one; unless, indeed," added he, smiling, "the witchery of her beauty has enslaved your Lordship; the girl is certainly a lovely creature!"

Lord Somertown's eyes struck fire,—"You do not mean to insult me, Colonel, I hope," said he.

"Simple *badinage*, I assure your Lordship," replied the Colonel, laying his hand upon his heart; "but I beseech your Lordship to inform me what crime poor Fanny has committed?"

"In the first place, she has formed an intimacy with Miss Stanhope," replied Lord Somertown, "which I deem an intolerable degradation to that young lady; and, in the next, acting with the consummate art which those low people generally possess, she has insinuated herself into the favour of my half-witted nephew, who, dazzled with the beauty you extolled so highly, and bewitched by the artful blandishments of the sorceress, fancies himself desperately in love with her; so much so, that forgetful of his engagements to Miss Stanhope, and the dignity of his own rank, he is at this moment planning a scheme to run away with and marry this young adventuress. I have this infor-

mation from the most unquestionable authority, confirmed by my own observation."

Colonel Ross was thunder-struck when he heard Lord Somertown declare that the Duke of Albemarle intended to *marry* Fanny. *He* had observed the Duke's attentions to the object of his own designs, but an idea of marriage had never entered his imagination; the cold disdain which the countenance of Fanny uniformly displayed whenever the Duke addressed her in company, had thrown Colonel Ross off his guard, and lulled his fears to sleep. He seemed now to awaken to a sudden sense of his danger, and his rage was little inferior to Lord Somertown's, as the conviction darted through his mind.

"Consummate hypocrite!" exclaimed he, "so young and so artful! the coolness with which she always appeared to treat the Duke, made me believe his Grace's overtures were of a different nature."

"I rejoice," said Lord Somertown, "that Col. Ross appears to see this affair in the same atrocious light that I do. Nothing surely is so unpardonable as when a low person, like that girl, takes advantage of the kindness shewn her by persons of a superior rank, to steal into a noble family, and for ever tarnish the honour of it by so unequal a match. Good Heavens! the Duke of Albemarle to marry a foundling! a girl without a name!"

"Horrid indeed!" exclaimed Col Ross, whose objections to the union sprung from a very different cause to what Lord Somertown imagined.

"Your feelings, Col. are so consonant to mine, upon this subject," said his Lordship, "that I flatter myself you will not refuse your aid in preventing so fatal a termination of my hopes as this ill-assorted marriage."

"Your Lordship may command me," replied

Col. Ross, "there is nothing that I would not do to prevent it."

Lord Somertown shook the Colonel by the hand—"My good friend," said his Lordship, "this ready compliance exceeds my hopes. I will now lay aside all reserve, and you and I will presently understand each other I am sure."

Lord Somertown was right: Col. Ross was not one of the scrupulous sort, when he had any self-gratification in view, and as Lord Somertown's proposals all appeared calculated to further his own wishes, he started no objection to the diabolical scheme his Lordship laid before him. What that scheme was will appear hereafter, for the consultation was interrupted by the appearance of a servant, who announced the arrival of a visitor.

"Mr. Hamilton," said he, "requests the favour of a few minutes conference, Sir," said the servant, bowing, "he is waiting in the breakfast room."

"Hamilton! Hamilton!" repeated the Colonel, "I don't know him; why didn't you say I was engaged?"

"I did, Sir, but he would not be denied. He said he knew you were at home, because Lord Somertown's carriage was waiting at the door, and he heard his lordship make an appointment with you at the concert last night."

"Oh," said the Colonel, "then it must be the rich Hamilton, for he was there last night, I was told: but I don't know him when I see him: so what he can want of me I cannot conceive."

"Mr. Hamilton asked if Miss Fanny was at home, first," said the servant, "and when I told him she was on a visit at the Marquis of Petersfield's, he gave his name, and desired to see you, Sir?"

"Very well," replied the Colonel; "tell Mr. Hamilton I will wait upon him immediately."

The servant withdrew.

"I think we may make some use of this circumstance." said Lord Somertown. "This is some lover of that artful girl's."

"Perhaps so, indeed," answered Colonel Ross, reddening, for he hated to hear of any lover for Fanny; "does your Lordship know Mr. Hamilton? he seems to know you."

"That may be very possible," replied Lord Somertown, answering the Colonel's last observation, "many people know *me*, of whom I have not the most distant knowledge: this Hamilton is one of them. He may be a *rich* man, but he is certainly not a man of *con equence*, for I *never* heard of him before."

Lord Somertown now ordered his chariot, and taking leave of the Colonel, he said, "Remember your promise, and command me in what way you choose."

"Your Lordship need not fear," answered his base associate, "I am too much interested in the event, to be lukewarm in the cause."

Lord Somertown nodded assent, and proceeded to his carriage. He readily believed the Colonel's assertion that he was *interested* in the event, because he had promised him a *borough*, for which honour he had long been sighing.

Colonel Ross was a deep politician, and a strong party man; there was enough, therefore, in the promise to awaken his energy. But his Lordship knew not the most powerful stimulus to the base action he had undertaken; he knew not that, urged by a brutal passion, which according to the jargon of modern depravity, he dignified with the name of love, this pretended patriot was secretly rejoicing that an opportunity offer-

ed of uniting in the same cause, his ambition and his inclination.

CHAPTER XVI.

A Proposal.

When Colonel Ross entered the breakfast room he was struck with the noble appearance of the gentleman who was there waiting for him, and a faint recollection of having once seen him, before, stole across his mind as he paid his compliments to him.

Mr. Hamilton appeared to be about forty years of age, or hardly so much, for there were traces of suffering on his countenance that seemed to tell a tale of sorrow rather than of years. His features were beautiful, and the expression of high spirit that sparkled in his dark eye, was softened by the benevolence that mingled with its vivid rays; his brow was arched, and his nose a perfect aquiline. His mouth, too, was calculated to inspire his beholders with confidence; candour seemed to play upon his lips, and truth herself, gave sanction to the sweet smile that adorned them. I have always thought *that* feature the most unerring index of the mind. Heaven has made it the organ by which we are intended to make our thoughts known to each other: and although the exalted gift is frequently perverted, the portals through which the speech must pass, remain faithful to the pur-

pose of the heart that suggests it. Never did the smile of artful blandishment or constrained politeness wear the guise of truth. The words that sound from the mouth may be false, but the curve that marks the lip at their departure, is true to the feeling that is either expressed or disguised by their utterance.

It was impossible to find a face formed with more faultless grace than Mr. Hamilton's; it displayed the perfection of manly beauty, yet did the shades of a deep melancholy sit on his pensive brow, and cloud his eye with sadness; but it was a melancholy that spoke of resignation and fortitude, awakening sympathy, allied to respect, in the hearts of his beholders.

The dignity with which he returned Colonel Ross's compliments, seemed to be natural to him; and the urbanity of his manners convinced his host that he *must* be *noble* as well as rich, although Lord Somertown had pronounced him to be *nobody*, because not upon the list of his right honourable acquaintances.

It might, perhaps, be the nobility of *nature*, which is, it must be confessed, of more intrinsic value than that conferred by *hereditary* rank. Be that as it may, the Colonel felt so little doubt of his guest's claim to respect, that he began an elaborate apology for having kept him waiting so long.

"It is *I* who ought to apologize for my intrusion, Sir," replied Mr. Hamilton, with a benignant smile; "but I trust, when you know the motive that induced me to take such a liberty, you will be inclined to forgive me for it."

The Colonel bowed, and Mr. Hamilton proceeded:

"You have a young lady under your protection, Sir, for whom I feel an interest, it will be as difficult for me to describe, as I already find it to

comprehend the cause of, unless, indeed, it be the resemblance she bears to a dear friend of mine, long since numbered with the dead."

"Fanny has powerful attractions," said Col. Ross, rather sarcastically, "and, I think, I can understand the sort of interest she has excited in your heart, Sir, without any far-fetched illustration of so common an event."

The blush of resentment mantled on Mr. Hamilton's cheek, as he listened to the Colonel's illiberal remark.

"Of Miss Fanny's attractions, excepting that powerful one of innocent sweetness, that so peculiarly characterises her countenance, *I* can have but a very superficial knowledge," said Mr. Hamilton, indignantly—"Your suspicions, Sir, are premature. I am not come here in the character of a *lover*, it is a title I disclaim. My heart is for ever shut against the power of beauty; my passions are dead; and philanthropy is the last surviving feeling of my soul. Miss Fanny's features awakened the remembrance of a long lost friend, and she became an object of almost inexpressible interest to me. I enquired who she was, and was informed that she is an orphan, and dependant on the bounty of strangers. Whether this tale be true or not, I cannot tell, and therefore came to solicit the favour from you, Sir, of further particulars concerning the young lady. If you will inform me what her name is, and to what family she is related, I shall consider myself greatly your debtor, and will endeavour to forget the too hasty judgment you formed of my intentions, which I now declare to be as pure as parental kindness can dictate. This young lady pleases me; she is poor, and I am rich; I am alone in the world, without a single claim upon me for the inheritance of the immense fortune I enjoy; what therefore, can I do more likely to conduce to my

own happiness, than to insure that of this child of misfortune, by . . ."

"*Marrying* her, I suppose, Sir," interrupted Colonel Ross, whose predilection in favour of Mr. Hamilton at his first entrance, was now converted into jealous hatred.

"I am astonished," exclaimed Mr. Hamilton, "at your persisting in perverting my meaning, Sir. I tell you I am not a lover: and I beg you will attend to what I say, and endeavour to *believe* it."

"That would be an effort above me," replied the Colonel; "I must confess I am not so romantically given as very *easily* to believe, that a sober middle-aged gentleman, like yourself, Mr. Hamilton, whatever he may profess, would interest himself about a pretty girl, like the one under my protection, for the mere *philanthropic* gratification of disinterestedly providing for her. Under this impression, I am constrained to tell you, Sir, that your visits will be dispensed with at this house."

"You confess that you have no intention of *marrying* Fanny: and as no other overtures *can* be received by her guardians, all questions respecting her, from you, Sir, will be deemed impertinent." As Colonel Ross spoke, he rose from his chair and pulled a bell; a servant appeared. "Mr. Hamilton's carriage," said he.

Mr. Hamilton rose indignantly, and darting a look of contempt at the Colonel, "I have stooped," said he, "to ask as a favour, what, perhaps, I ought rather to have demanded, as the champion of oppressed innocence. I have marked you, Colonel Ross, and I warn you to beware what you do. We seldom suspect sinister designs in others, unless we have cherished them ourselves."

"The application is good in your own case, Sir," said the Colonel, and turned on his heel; for there was a scrutiny in Mr. Hamilton's eye that disconcerted him.

Mr. Hamilton now withdrew; and as he stepped into his chariot, he vowed to devote himself to the protection of the defenceless Fanny. Some hints that had reached his ear in the course of his enquiries respecting her, were now confirmed by the Colonel's behaviour.

As soon as Mr. Hamilton was gone, Colonel Ross returned to his study, in order to think over, without the probability of an interruption, the best means that could be devised to prevent Fanny from being informed of Mr. Hamilton's designs in her favour.

The Colonel did not entertain a doubt that a marriage was her new friend's ultimate view, although in the beginning of the affair he chose to assume a more disinterested character. Of that benevolence that delights in making others happy, without one selfish view in the action, Colonel Ross knew nothing; the feelings of his heart, if he had any, had been either stifled in their infancy, or called forth only for selfish—sensual enjoyments.

He was the younger brother of an Earl, and provided for by his father, as younger brothers generally are in noble families. The meanness allied to cunning, natural to his disposition, had easily taught him to win upon his elder brother's heart, by the blandishment of adulation, and servile submission to his will. The artifice had succeeded, and Lord Ballafyn had rewarded his complaisant brother with a commission, and a pretty estate, to support the dignity of the family, in addition to what his father had left him. His marriage with Lady Maria Trentham, had increased his fortune, as she had thirty thousand pounds more than her sisters, which had been bequeathed her by her maternal grandfather. But tell me when was the sordid mind satisfied?

Colonel Ross was avaricious, and extremely

proud; it was difficult to reconcile the opposite propensities of these feelings; as the demands of his pride were severe taxes upon his meanness. An opportunity now offered of gratifying *all* his evil tendencies, and he felt the impulse irresistible.

Should Mr. Hamilton's generous intentions be made known respecting Fanny, it might prevent the execution of his scheme, and disappoint his hopes of realizing both riches and power, by the very act that would give him the uninterrupted possession of the girl he had long secretly sighed for.

Colonel Ross had a head formed for intrigue; he was not therefore long in his deliberations; but decided with a promptitude for which he had often been praised by his partners in iniquity.

As soon as he saw his amiable lady, he informed her of Mr. Hamilton's visit, but disguised the motives of it, under the most daring falsehood. He represented that gentleman's application to himself as the nefarious trick of an abandoned seducer, who, pleased with the pretty face of an innocent inexperienced girl, wished to ensnare her by a pretended show of friendship.

"He did not dare to avow his diabolical designs," said the Colonel, "because he feared I should kick him out of my house; but, after having offered to provide for the girl, out of the ample fortune he possesses, he had the effrontery to own, when pressed upon by my questions, that he had no thoughts of marrying her.

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Lady Maria, "can it be possible that any one can be so depraved? But how did you treat such a shocking breach of decency?"

"I was greatly incensed," replied the Colonel, and "after forbidding him the house, I rung the bell, and called for his carriage."

"Charming," said Lady Maria; "and what did he say to that?

"Oh, he sneaked off without resenting the affront I had offered him. But, my dear Maria, we must take double care of poor Fanny. I wish she had finished her visit at the Marquis of Petersfield's. This is a dangerous fellow; he is certainly the handsomest man I ever saw, and extremely fascinating; and although he is past the bloom of youth, he may be a formidable tempter, to the inexperienced Fanny. I really think it would be wise to take her into the country for a little while. Should you have any objection to visiting Pemberton Abbey for a few weeks."

"Oh, no; I should like it of all things, if you think it necessary," said Lady Maria.

"It is necessary, you may be sure," replied the Colonel. "Hamilton will leave no artifice untried to entrap her, you may depend upon that: and the poor girl will be lost before we are aware of his design; but you must not let Fanny suppose we leave town on her account, or it is a hundred to one but it will make her unwilling to go."

"Indeed," said Lady Maria, "you are mistaken; I am sure that reason would make her go more readily; you have now alarmed me so truly, that I shall be as much on the watch as you are."

"Fanny is very beautiful; and if such a man as Mr. Hamilton can form such designs against her, what has she not to fear from those of less sober habits, who openly profess to admire her!"

"It is impossible to calculate," said the Colonel, "and therefore the sooner she goes into the country the better."

CHAPTER XVII.

A Tête-a-tête.

When Lady Maria met Fanny in the course of that day, she mentioned the circumstance of Mr. Hamilton's visit, and her own, and Colonel Ross's alarm upon the subject, adding, that it was their decided opinion, that her safety depended upon her immediate removal into the country. "I will accompany you, Fanny," said the good-natured, but weak minded Lady Maria, "for surely you cannot object to go." "I have not the least objection to leaving town," said Fanny, laughing, "but really cannot see any necessity for so doing on Mr. Hamilton's account; I am sure, were I to consult my own inclination, he is one of the last people I should wish to fly from; there is something so fascinating in his manner, that I feel to love without knowing him; his voice is persuasion itself, I could listen to it for ever."

"Upon my honour, you astonish and frighten me," said Lady Maria, "this must be a most dangerous man indeed. Why, my dear Fanny, you have seen him only once, and he has absolutely turned your head."

"I beg your ladyship's pardon," replied Fanny, "I have seen Mr. Hamilton twice, for he is the very gentleman who rescued me from the impertinence of the man in Hyde Park. I recollected his voice the instant he spoke last night, it seemed to thrill through my very heart."

"It could not be the same person, my dear," answered Lady Maria, "or Colonel Ross would

have remembered him, for you know he saw him." "I know he did," rejoined Fanny, "but perhaps he did not make such a strong impression upon the Colonel's memory as he did upon mine: it is *impossible* that *I* should *ever* forget him."

"Well, upon my honour, Fanny, you talk so strangely, I cannot tell what to make of you; to fall in love with a stranger, and then speak about it as unconcerned as if there was nothing in it, is so unlike your natural character, that I really do not know my friend Fanny in the picture."

"I know very little about *love*," replied Fanny, *naively*, "but I do not think what I feel for Mr. Hamilton is what is generally understood by the term *falling in love*. I cannot be said to love a person that I do not know. I am unacquainted with a single virtue that may adorn Mr. Hamilton; I am equally ignorant whether his character is not tarnished by some vice that would disgust me were it known to me. Esteem is therefore impossible, and love in my heart cannot exist without it; yet am I irresistibly drawn as it were by a secret instinct which I can neither account for nor describe, to feel interested for this gentleman, beyond what I ever before experienced for any mortal."

"Depend upon it, my dear," said Lady Maria, "this man has used some unfair means to engage your affections. I have heard there are *charms* that will take such effect as to render it impossible to escape their witchcraft, and your description of your unaccountable partiality for Mr. Hamilton, convinces me that you are under the influence of some demoniac conjuration."

"Surely, my dear Lady Maria," said Fanny, "you cannot be weak enough to believe in witchcraft? I cannot help laughing at such a preposterous idea."

"You may laugh, if you please," answered

Lady Maria, "but I shall lose no time in taking you out of town. I vow I shall expect to see you carried away in a whirlwind, or conveyed up the chimney, if you remain within the circle of this vile necromancer any longer."

"Nay, my dear friend," replied Fanny, "if such be indeed your creed, a removal into the country will avail me but little, a genii so powerful can surely find me in the most sequestered retreat; I am nevertheless ready to accompany your Ladyship at the shortest notice."

When Miss Stanhope was informed of Lady Maria's sudden determination to quit London, and take Fanny with her, she expressed the most violent discontent; it was impossible any longer to carry on the cheat that had hitherto *puzzled* the Duke, for he had more than once entertained doubts as to the perfect truth of the story which he had first implicitly believed.

"What can be the meaning of this unaccountable whim," said that young lady to Fanny, "is Lady Maria light-headed, or has the Colonel some intrigue upon his hands, that he cannot carry on so well while his wife is in town, for I imagine *he* is not to make one in this Quixotic expedition?"

"I really do not know," answered Fanny, "for nothing has been explained to me, excepting what I have told you, that Colonel Ross has taken it in his head that Mr. Hamilton is a conjuror, and that I shall be conveyed to some enchanted castle, by a touch of his wand, unless I am immediately removed into the country, Lady Maria is a convert of the same opinion, and the result is, I *must* go into the country."

"Well, my dear," answered Miss Stanhope, "if I were you I would please these two fools; I *would* go into the country, but it should not be where they please, but where I liked myself; I

will explain myself more fully this evening, if you will come into my dressing room as soon as we leave the dining parlour. It will be your own fault if you do not shew them that you understand *conjuration* as well as they, and know how to get into an enchanted castle, without the assistance of Mr. Hamilton."

Fanny looked surprised.—" What do you mean, Amelia?" said she.

" A riddle you cannot comprehend yet," replied Miss Stanhope, " but I tell you it shall be explained to you in the evening; one thing, however, I will tell you. On the accomplishment of the scheme comprised in that riddle, depends my future happiness."

Fanny in vain entreated Miss Stanhope to explain herself more fully: she would not do it.

" Where is it they are going to take you to, Fanny?" said she, not noticing the questions which had just been asked her.

" Into Yorkshire," replied her friend. " Lady Ellincourt gave Colonel Ross and Lady Maria permission to make use of her seat there whenever they found it agreeable; and I assure you I shall feel great pleasure in revisiting a place where I have spent so many happy days."

" Why, Pemberton Abbey is an odd place to take you to, if they are afraid of Mr. Hamilton. He has a large estate that joins Lady Ellincourt's, which, you know, together with the mansion, was purchased of the gentleman who left the fortune to the *Conjuror*, as your *wise* ones call Mr. Hamilton. Apropos, you say he was your champion in Hyde Park, when you were attacked by the 'Dragon of Wantley.' Do you think him handsome?"

" The handsomest man I ever saw," answered Fanny.

" Hush, my dear; you forget you have seen the

Duke of Albermarle. You surely do not think Mr. Hamilton is to be compared with the Duke."

"I don't expect *you* should think so," replied Fanny; "but you may allow me to prefer Mr. Hamilton to the Duke."

"Prefer him! Why certainly, you do not like Mr. Hamiliton best. I shall believe in the conjuration scheme if you say yes," interrupted Miss Stanhope.

"Nay: as to *liking* either," answered Fanny, "I am not well enough acquainted with them to warrant such an expression; but I certainly know which interests me most."

"And pray let us hear who that happy creature is," said Amelia.

"Mr. Hamilton, beyond all comparison," rejoined Fanny; "and yet I know not why it is so."

"Sorcery and witchcraft!" exclaimed Amelia. "Lady Maria is right! Why, my dear, he is an old man compared to you. For heaven's sake don't fall in love with an old man."

"I am not in love," answered Fanny, pettishly: "I hate that word. I tell you, Amelia, I would not marry Mr. Hamilton, if he was an Emperor."

"Marry him, indeed! No, I hope you would not think of marrying a man who is old enough to be your father."

"My father!" ejaculated Fanny; "sweet words! How does my orphan heart pant to hail that honoured name! Oh, that I had a father! That Mr. Hamilton was my father!"

"Now that's a good girl," said Miss Stanhope, "that's an excellent thought. I dare say Mr. Hamilton is your father; and that accounts for the wonderful sympathy between you. You are a foundling, you know."

"But Mr. Hamilton is a Creole, is he not?" said Fanny, who caught early at the suggestion so lightly made by her giddy friend. "Mr

Hamilton is a Creole, and never was in England till now."

"Oh, never mind that," rejoined Amelia, "inconsistencies are nothing in a *novel*. You were sent over in a *hamper* to be educated in England; and then he forgot to enquire where they had placed you, and so you came to be lost."

Fanny's countenance fell when she perceived, by this speech, that Miss Stanhope had no serious idea of the probability she had suggested. "Alas!" thought she, "Amelia is surrounded by affluence, and feels not as I do, the mortifying circumstances of dependance. She is an orphan, but not an indigent one. It is not, however, Mr. Hamilton's riches I sigh for; the sacred title of father would be equally dear to my heart, if accompanied by poverty. To be hailed by the endearing name of child; to be pressed to the paternal bosom of a virtuous parent, and find within the circle of a father's arms, a safe asylum from the persecutions of a cruel world. This is what I wish for, and gladly would I embrace obscurity and indigence, were those the terms on which alone I could obtain that fondly wished for blessing!"

"I dare say it would be mighty *pathetic*," said Amelia, "if one could read all that is passing in that serious *head* just now. But cheer up, child; the naughty conjurors shall not have you, nor the anti-conjurors either, for I mean to dispose of you myself, in the prettiest way imaginable. Your romantic story shall have such a charming termination, that all the booksellers shall be giving it to the novel-writers for a subject. I intend writing a poem on it myself. I shall choose Scott's style; that irregular metre will suit my whimsical fancy exactly."

"It is a happy thing," said Fanny, with a sigh, "that you have got me for a *butt*."

"Nay my dear," said Miss Stanhope, "it will be *your* turn soon; and then if you don't make a *butt* of me, it will be your own fault. But there is the first bell; make haste to your toilet; and if you are not of Thompson's opinion on the subject of unadorned beauty, make yourself as *killing* as possible. Your good looks will not be wasted."

"Who is coming to dine here?" asked Fanny.

"Several gentlemen, and *perhaps* Mr. Hamilton."

"Pho?" cried Fanny, "you only say that to tease *me*."

"Upon my honour I should not feel at all surprised," replied Miss Stanhope, "for I heard Lord Cheviotdale praising Mr. Hamilton to the Marquis; and the latter said he would get acquainted with him; and should that be the case, I will ask him to give you away when you are married, and then he *will* be your father."

"Giddy girl!" exclaimed Fanny, as she left the room. "Will there ever come a time that you will be serious?"

"Oh yes, my dear; when I am *married*."

CHAPTER XVIII.

A Dilemma.

When Fanny entered the dining parlour, the company were just seating themselves; for her long conversation with Amelia had made her too late at her toilet.

The Duke of Albemarle took her hand as she approached the table, and led her to the chair next Miss Stanhope's, and immediately seated himself beside her.

"Your lovely friend," said his Grace, addressing Fanny in a low voice, "has given me permission to assume the character of your *Cicesbeo*. Tell me, Madam, has that grant your sanction?"

"It is an honour to which I am by no means entitled," replied Fanny, blushing excessively.

"It will confer an honour upon me," rejoined the Duke, "more highly valued than any other *can be*. Say then, lovely *Miss Stanhope*, that you do not forbid the presumption."

"Your Grace mistakes the person you are speaking to," replied Fanny, "and renders my situation distressing beyond expression."

"Heaven forbid," exclaimed the Duke, "I will be silent *now*; but the moment approaches which must dissipate this cloud of error."

The whole of this conversation had passed in a whisper, and unheard by the surrounding guests; but the Duke's marked attention to Fanny, had not passed unnoticed by several ladies who sat near the Marchioness, and who observed, "that it really was too bad to begin *flirting before* marriage, close to his bride's elbow too. But, no doubt, the *forwardness* of the *girl* was the cause of such strange behaviour. Poor Fanny in the mean time sat the very picture of confusion and embarrassment, totally at a loss to understand the Duke's enigmatical address to her.

She waited the moment of withdrawing from table, with an impatience so painfully exquisite, that she could not command presence of mind enough to reply collectively to the little nothings which were said to her by the ephemera about her.

Miss Stanhope, with her usual giddiness, en-

joyed her confusion, and added considerably to it by remarking to the Duke, "that she really believed he was an arrant thief."

"A thief!" re-echoed his grace: "pray ma'am explain yourself."

"Nay, appearances are strong against your Grace, I assure you. Fanny was in full possession of all her faculties about ten minutes before she entered this room, and it is plain she has lost her recollection, and the use of her tongue, since she sat by you; what, therefore, can be inferred, but that you have stolen them?"

Before the Duke could reply to this mad speech, the Marchioness rose to quit the table, and Fanny was released from her uncomfortable situation.

On retiring to the drawing room, Miss Stanhope reminded Fanny of her engagement.

"Come" said she, offering her arm, "you know we have an explanation. I thought you would be dying for it, I did not expect to be obliged to remind you of it."

"Indeed," replied Fanny, "you talk to me in such a wild strain, that I place no confidence in any thing you say."

"Thank you, my dear, you are vastly polite, I must confess, nevertheless I excuse you, because I can feel for you just now; there does appear a mystery, certainly."

By this time they had reached Miss Stanhope's dressing room, which had been fitted up for the reception of her morning visitors, and was an elegant apartment on the first floor, with folding doors, that opened upon a terrace in the gardens of Petersfield House. The weather being warm, these doors were thrown open, and Amelia seated herself upon a sopha that stood on the outside, and placing Fanny beside her, began her promised explanation in the following words:

"I know," said she, "what you will say to

me for the prank I have played you; but as I lose a lover, and you gain a coronet by it, I think you have not much cause to be angry. In the first place, then, I must tell you, that I never could endure the idea of marrying the Duke of Albemarle, from the first time I ever heard the alliance talked of, and that is as long ago as I can remember any thing. An antipathy so deeply rooted, and of such long standing, is not easily conquered, and I have always been beating my brains to imagine some quaint device to get rid of the match, and yet preserve my fortune, which I had always been told must be the forfeit of my refusal of the Duke's hand. My imagination was not, however, sufficiently fertile to supply any scheme that appeared practicable, until the lucky hour in which your accident introduced you to my intended husband; he saw and admired you, and I was sufficiently clear-sighted to penetrate the secret in an instant, and with the ability of a skilful general, I lost no time in arranging my plan of attack, and so scientifically did I manœuvre, that I made you both prisoners, without your even suspecting an ambush; I should feel more vain of my skill in tactics if it were not for this one recollection. I believe my wits had been sharpened a little while before, by a discovery that made prompt measures indispensable. I had found out that I not only detested the idea of marrying the Duke, but that there was a being in existence, for whom I felt no such antipathy, and whose wife I had rather be than the empress of modern Alexander himself; my fortune was now become of greater value in my eyes, because I thought it would be acceptable to the man of my choice, and I determined, if possible, to make the Duke the transgressor, and thus insure the possession of it to him.

The scheme succeeded beyond my expectations,

more, I believe, owing to the love-sick blindness of the Duke, than any great ingenuity of mine. I know the world well enough, inexperienced as I am, to feel sure that my fortune, and the engagement that seemed to exist between the Duke of Albemarle and myself, would act as powerful checks to the encouragement of a mere romantic passion, conceived in the warmth of youthful effervescence; that the Duke should admire you, nay, absolutely love you, I knew to be both possible, and even likely to happen; but that he should fly in the face of prudence, and determine to fight the Son of Grumbo, his uncle, to obtain you, I thought rather to be wished than obtained; I therefore laid a trap for his prudence, and baited it with a savory scrap of plausibility, and had soon the unspeakable satisfaction of seeing my silly mouse caught, beyond the possibility of an escape. I made up a serious face, the first time we met after the accident, and assured him with great shew of truth that you were Miss Stanhope, and that you had prevailed upon me to assume your name and character, under the romantic hope of obtaining his Grace's affections for the sake of pure merit and disinterested love; I added, that Lord Somertown was a party in the trick, and that nothing would please his uncle so well as to see him take notice of the real heiress, in her disguise, although his outward carriage would imply resentment. Perhaps had the Duke been less enamoured, he would have been more clear-sighted; be that as it may, he was caught by the artifice, and believed every thing I said; you, being here on a visit, favoured the deceit, and the consequence is, that the poor swain is too far gone in the tender passion to recede, although he is informed that he has an explanation to expect that will place the disinterestedness of his passion at issue. We shall

see how he will behave, when I confess the whole trick. If he continues faithful, I shall esteem him; if otherwise, I shall despise, and will take care to be even with him."

CHAPTER XIX.

Astonishment.

"You have elucidated a mystery," said Fanny, "that has tormented me a long time; but I cannot say you have done it in a satisfactory manner. Your artifice can answer no purpose whatever, but to exasperate your guardians, disgust the Duke, and render me ridiculous, or even more than ridiculous; for it will be supposed that *I* had some part in the plot; and rest assured, if that be the case, it will make me more wretched than any other circumstance possibly could."

"Never fear, my dear Fanny," replied Miss Stanhope, "the Duke is too far gone to think about prudence now; I have watched him, and I am sure he would as soon part with his life as with the hope of marrying you. As I said before, had he known who you were at first, he might have consulted prudence, and avoided the society of a person so dangerous to his peace; but now it is too late; he has had frequent opportunities of observing that your beauty is the least part of your powers of pleasing; and he has ex-

pressed himself to me in rapturous terms of those mental charms that are to form the happiness of his future life, when he is united to 'the most lovely of women.' Those are his own words. When people have imagined the Duke was making love to me, he was entertaining me with *your* praises, little Madam. Am I not a good girl to listen to them without envy? and from the mouth of a lover too!"

"You have done me an irreparable injury," replied Fanny, "by making me act a part in this drama, although without my concurrence."

"How so," asked Miss Stanhope: "surely it is no inju y to lay a plan for making you a Duchess?"

"You do not think becoming the Duchess of Albemarle comprises much happiness," said Fanny, "or you would not reject the offer yourself."

"You are pleased to be sharp upon me," answered her friend, "but you ought to recollect, my dear, that *I* don't *like* the Duke."

"Neither do I," rejoined Fanny. "By your own confession, you acknowledge, that had his Grace supposed me to be the portionless creature I am, his *prudence* would have taught him to avoid me: and yet you suppose me mean enough to take advantage of the infatuation of his senses, which by the bye, I don't believe in, and become a Duchess at the expence of my delicacy."

"Your silly scruples about delicacy and nonsense will ruin every thing," said Miss Stanhope, in an angry tone, "these high-flown romantic notions do very well in the heroine of a novel, but positively they have not common sense in the straight forward every day occurrences of life; surely to a girl who has no dependance but on the bounty of her friends, the opportunity of marrying so advantageously ought not to be slighted.

"Your ideas and mine are very different upon this subject," replied Fanny, indignantly, "nothing ought to be considered advantageous to a woman that militates against her delicacy, and *poor* and *dependant* as I am, I would not abate one single grain of that nice feeling to become an *empress*; these are my sentiments, and I trust now you know them, you will at least respect me so far as to forbear mentioning the subject to me any more."

"I have done," replied Miss Stanhope, laughing, "but here comes one to whom the interdiction does not extend, I hope."

As she spoke, the Duke of Albemarle entered from the garden.

"I am punctual," said he, looking at his watch, and addressing Miss Stanhope, "tell me, my charming friend, that I am welcome!"

"To me, most welcome," replied she: "but for that young lady, (pointing to Fanny,) I cannot answer so well as I flattered myself I could."

"The visit of the Duke of Albemarle to Miss Stanhope, can want no concurrence of mine," said Fanny, "I will therefore retire."

The Duke seized both Fanny's hands, as she rose from her chair, and made a motion to go.

"No, by heavens!" said he, "I have suffered suspense too long; you shall not now leave me, lovely incomprehensible, until an explanation has taken place between us."

"That is right," said Miss Stanhope, "she has forbidden me to speak to her again upon the subject, but your Grace is a privileged person."

"Would to heaven I were so," rejoined the Duke.

"Your Grace requires an explanation of me," said Fanny, blushing, "whilst I am unconscious how it is possible that I should have one to give

you; there has been nothing mysterious in any part of my conduct since I have had the honour of being known to your Grace."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the Duke, turning to Miss Stanhope, "what can this mean?"

"In pity to you both," replied that giddy girl, "I will do more than the laws of the land require of any body, *i. e.* I will accuse myself." She then recapitulated the particulars relating to her plot already known, adding with a laugh, "like all other busy bodies, I have got myself into the worst scrape after all, and am likely to be thanked by nobody at last; for if your Grace be but as angry with me as my friend Fanny, I have made a blessed piece of work of it indeed!"

"I must express my concern," said the Duke, "that Miss Stanhope should have so far mistaken my character, as to suppose any deceit necessary to induce me to act towards her with the liberality she is so justly entitled to. Had I been aware of your plot, it would have saved me much pain, as I should not have told my uncle that Miss Stanhope was the choice of my heart, and the arbitress of my happiness: this lady," turning to Fanny, "has made it impossible for me to offer to any other woman the heart which is her's alone, and which henceforward depends for happiness upon her acceptance or refusal of its devotion; but you, Miss Stanhope, who know Lord Somertown so well, must be aware how difficult you have rendered the task of breaking to him, a circumstance so opposite to his views and wishes, and of which he has not the most distant suspicion."

"On my account, my Lord," said Fanny, "I trust you will not incur any displeasure from your uncle, since, however highly honoured by your Grace's notice, I am so circumstanced, that it is utterly impossible for me to listen to your addresses: my

presence here is no longer necessary, as the mystery of which you complained has been unravelled; and if you entertained any doubt of my sentiments, I trust they are for ever removed." So saying, without giving the Duke time to answer her, and before Miss Stanhope was aware of her intentions, Fanny darted out of the room, and left her two auditors in a frame of mind not very agreeable to themselves.

CHAPTER XX.

Reparation.

"WHAT an unaccountable creature that girl is," exclaimed Miss Stanhope, as Fanny left the room, "who would have supposed a dependant creature like her, possessed such a lofty spirit."

"I should," replied the Duke, "and if you had thought me worthy of your confidence, Miss Stanhope, I would have shewn you the fallacy of such an experiment with a girl like Fanny. Good heaven! that I should only be made acquainted with her worth, to lament the impossibility of possessing her. You have ruined me, Amelia; for ever destroyed my peace of mind, and exposed me to the vindictive spirit of Lord Somertown, without obtaining one advantage yourself; had you candidly told me at our first meeting, that you were averse to the alliance, I should not have led my uncle into the error that will render his wrath a thousand times more fierce when he finds that he has been deceived. And who knows, perhaps the lovely and innocent object of my affection may be the sacrifice first immolated upon the altar of

revenge. Alas! I know my uncle too well to trust him with the fatal secret, unless I were willing to devote the lovely Fanny to the dire consequences of his resentment."

"Upon my honour, you frighten me," said Miss Stanhope, turning pale, "what a fool I am, I will never attempt scheming again; well, I will do all I can to repair the injury; the secret must be faithfully kept, and trust to me for the *denouement*, it shall be a happy one; that is, unless Fanny be perverse."

"Forgive me," said the Duke, "but you have shewn yourself so unskilful at plotting, that I do not like to trust you without knowing what your intentions are, for if the secret be kept, and every thing go on, as usual, I see no possibility of avoiding the worst of all *denouements*—our ill-starred nuptials."

"Well, to be sure, you are the politest creature that ever lived, to tell a lady to her face that the worst thing that could befal you, would be to marry her; but I must take it for my pains, for I have deserved it, so now I will retaliate, that is the only satisfaction left me. There cannot exist a greater antipathy on your side to the alliance than that cherished in my heart, an antipathy which is strengthened and increased by an attachment to another person; it was the hope of making you the aggressor, in breaking off the treaty of marriage that led me to the stratagem which has so completely failed; as thereby I hoped to escape the penalty attached to the delinquency, not that I intended to take the forfeit money from you, but merely to save my own; this mercenary view induced me to quit the path of truth, and wander in the trackless maze of cunning; but now I renounce the paltry scheme, and regardless of fortune, or any other consideration, have resolved to make reparation for the

error I have committed; leave it therefore to me, and fearlessly pursue your accustomed attention, and proceed with the preparations for our expected nuptials, *I* will take care to render them impossible, and to free you from the shadow of blame, I will not tell you my plan, because I have set my heart upon a surprise; but I repeat you may safely trust me; I am now treading in the plain open path of generosity, of honour, and can say with truth, that I am now *en pays de connoissance,* it was only in the region of cunning that I lost myself, for *there* I was a *stranger.*"

"I *will* trust you," said the Duke, "although you have so cruelly misled me, for it is impossible to doubt the candid tale you tell; but remember, I will not dishonour my name or be stigmatized with the imputation of dishonourable dealing, therefore, if I follow your directions, and go on with the *appearance* of a courtship, our marriage is inevitable, unless *you* prevent it, for I will not act like a scoundrel though *death* should be the alternative."

"Fear me not," answered Amelia, "here is my hand as a pledge of my fidelity; I will not foil you, but lest the slightest idea of collusion should attach to you, from this minute we drop the subject, until it be finally decided; so now go about your business, and I will seek Fanny, and try to soothe her ruffled spirit. She is a haughty little puss; I believe her heart is lined with buckram."

"Do not irritate her feelings, I entreat you, said the Duke, "she is exquisitely sensitive; and should she imbibe an idea that I presumed upon the knowledge of her dependant situation, she will be lost for ever to me. You owe me this complaisance, my dear Miss Stanhope, for you have placed my happiness on a balance."

"I will attend to what you say," answered Amelia, "therefore make yourself easy."

The Duke now retired, and Amelia went to look for Fanny. She found her in her own apartment, whither she had fled when she quitted Miss Stanhope's dressing-room. A torrent of tears had relieved the oppressed feelings of her heart, and she was now more composed.

Fanny's spirit was naturally noble, and rose superior to the dependance of her situation. Whilst under the protection of Lady Ellincourt, she had not felt the mortifications to which her ladyship's absence had now so painfully exposed her. Instead, however, of becoming servile, or endeavouring to conciliate the regards of her haughty companions, by that unvarying complaisance which generally distinguishes the humble companion; Fanny had become more reserved, and assumed an air of dignity, which consciousness of innate worth could alone have supported. The Duke of Albemarle had appeared in her eyes exactly that sort of man she would have chosen had she been entitled by rank or fortune to encourage his addresses; yet notwithstanding this predilection in his favour, she had persevered in receiving his attentions with a degree of coldness that would have convinced him she was entirely averse to him, had he not been encouraged to persist by Miss Stanhope's assurances, that it was merely the effect of a romantic determination to prove the sincerity of his passion to the utmost; the discovery of the deceit that had been practised under the sanction of her name, gave Fanny the most poignant regret, as the same delicate spirit that had made her veil her real sentiments, under the appearance of indifference, whilst uncertain of his intentions, now sternly forbade the humiliation of marrying, clandestinely, the man, who had been led to suppose, she had laid a trap to ensnare his affections, and whose superiority of rank and for-

tune might fully justify, a suspicion, that ambition was the chief inducement.

"Never!" said the noble-minded girl, as she quitted Miss Stanhope's apartment. "Never could I receive the addresses of a man whose confidence in my integrity has been destroyed by the implication of artifice upon my character; no, generous Albemarle, I can now never listen to your vows, and although my heart overflows with grateful tenderness for the partiality you have honoured me with, the die is cast, and I can never be yours; doomed to conceal within the aching boundary of my own bosom the sorrow that consumes me, I shall gladly retire into the country, where at least the restraint that now holds every feature in bondage may be dispensed with, and I may weep unquestioned and alone!"

Such was the soliloquy that had employed the mind of Fanny, before Amelia came to disturb her. The lively girl began to rally her pensive friend with her usual vivacity, and made use of every argument her ingenuity could supply her with, to prove that she ought to receive the Duke's addresses with complacency, although she could not deny that for the present at least those addresses must be *clandestine*.

"Enough, my dear Amelia," interrupted Fanny, "that single proposition overturns your argument; nothing clandestine *can* be right, this excellent maxim I owe to my beloved, my lamented Lady Ellincourt—I say lamented, because some secret intelligence seems to assure me that I shall see her no more. If the Duke is ashamed to acknowledge me as the object of his choice, I should be equally ashamed to be a party in so mean a connection; nothing surely can degrade a woman more than receiving the clandestine addresses of a lover; and if he be greatly her superior, she incurs the odium of imposing upon his weakness

I entreat you will never name the subject to me again, for I would not wed with *royalty* upon such mortifying terms; to-morrow I shall return to Col. Ross's to prepare for my journey: when you wish to see me, you will favour me with your company there: I shall not therefore be obliged to meet the Duke, who I trust will soon forget me, and depend upon it I will make every effort in my power to efface his image from my mind."

"It will require some *effort* then," said Amelia, archly, "I am glad, however, to hear that, and I will take care to report it to my *client* by way of a cordial."

"If you value my peace of mind, you will never name me to your client again," said Fanny, "but whether you do or not, my resolution will remain unshaken. But come, let us return to the company, where, no doubt, our absence has been noticed."

"Oh no doubt," replied Amelia, "such charming creatures as we are, must be *missed*, so *allons*," and she took Fanny's arm, and led the way to the drawing-room. As soon as they entered, the Marchioness of Petersfield called Miss Stanhope to her—"Amelia," said she, "we are going to the Opera, will you go?"

"I never thought about it," said Miss Stanhope. "What occasions this sudden resolution, you did not intend it before dinner?"

"Oh no," replied the Marchioness, "but the Marquis of Cheviotdale has been teasing me into the scheme; I had lent my box to Lady Mary Bouverie, but she has just sent word that she cannot use it, as her eldest son is very ill; Lord Cheviotdale and all heard me read the note to Maria, and he has been almost upon his knees to persuade me to go. He says this new opera is a most divine thing; and as a further inducement, he has promised to introduce the *inter-*

esting Creole to us, and every body is making such a fuss about him, that positively it is quite a bore not to know him."

"And who in the name of wonder is the *interesting Creole*?" said Miss Stanhope, "I am an enthusiast about *interesting* people, do tell me his name. Is he young?"

"His name is Hamilton; he is not young, but he is the most beautiful creature that ever was seen; Lord Cheviotdale says, the ladies are positively dying for him by hundreds."

"Then I pity them," rejoined Amelia, "for it is labour in vain for them to fall in love with him, if he be the rich Mr. Hamilton."

"He is indeed the *rich* Mr. Hamilton in the vocabulary of the votaries of *Plutus*; but he is the *handsome* Mr. Hamilton, and the *interesting* Creole with the ladies," answered the Marchioness "so you *must* go; but apropos, you spoke as if you were acquainted with him just now, do you know any of his history, they say it is a most extraordinary one?"

"What *I* know about him," answered Amelia, "has nothing extraordinary in it, it is the most natural thing in the world, he has fallen in love with a young girl, and old bachelors are very apt to do that."

"Who is she? what young girl do you mean?" was vociferated from two or three voices at once.

"I will not tell you," answered Amelia, laughing, "if we all go the Opera you will soon see."

"You must persuade Maria then," said the Marchioness, "for she seems averse to the proposal."

Lady Maria was on the other side of the room, whilst they had been talking of Mr. Hamilton, and had heard nothing of the conversation. Miss Stanhope went to her, and endeavoured to persuade her to go to the Opera.

"No," replied her ladyship, "I am going home, and Fanny has just been so kind as to promise to go with me; her visit has surely been long enough here."

"Your ladyship must excuse me there," said Amelia, "you are going to run away with Fanny into the country, and that is bad enough, for you know I can hardly live without her; but positively you shall not take her to-night, I will not go to the Opera without she goes."

"Now, Fanny, would you not like to go to the Opera."

"I am very fond of the Opera," answered Fanny, "but I have promised Lady Maria to return with her."

"Well, then, you must break your promise," that is all I know," interrupted Miss Stanhope, "for a silly vow is better broken than kept."

"I will not break my promise," replied Fanny, "for I never do; but if Lady Maria likes to release me, that is a different thing."

"Lady Maria *will* release you, she *must*," said Amelia, "for I am determined to have my own way as long as I can; I am going to be married, and then I shall *never* have it, I suppose."

Lady Maria laughed. "You are a wild creature," said her ladyship, "and do just what you please with every body, I believe I shall go to the Opera myself to accommodate you."

"That's a divine creature, now I love you!" rejoined Miss Stanhope, "come Fanny, (turning to her pensive friend,) let us go and put a little more brilliancy on our heads, the simple costume in which they are now dressed will not do for the Opera, I intend to be very killing; perhaps you may think you can do mischief enough without the foreign aid of ornament, but I am not so vain."

"Don't be long at your toilet," said the Mar-

chioness, as Amelia and Fanny left the room, "we are going to have tea directly."

As soon as they were gone, "What a ridiculous fuss is made about that girl, I am positively sick of it," said the Marchioness. "Miss Stanhope's regard for her is quite infatuation."

"Fanny is a very good girl," said Lady Maria, but I really do wonder sometimes myself, what people see in her, to be so violently enchanted."

"When do the Ellincourts come home?" asked a lady who sat by.

"I don't know, indeed," answered Lady Maria, "I wish they were come, for I grow quite uneasy about my charge."

"How so," said the Marchioness, "I thought you said she was a very good girl."

"So she is," replied Lady Maria, "but I am afraid somebody will run away with her; Colonel Ross says there are so many people in love with her."

The ladies laughed. "Oh never fear," said one of them, "pretty girls are not scarce enough to tempt men to much risk to obtain one!—Don't some people say she is the daughter of Lord E. by that Italian mistress he kept."

"Oh dear no," answered another, "she is not Lord Ellincourt's daughter, she is too old for that, but I have heard that Lady Ellincourt was afraid she would be *her* daughter, for Lord Ellincourt was crazy about her, and would certainly have married her, if his mother had not made him go abroad."

"Lord Ellincourt is safe now," said a third, 'for he is married to a lady of very large fortune."

"I know her very well," said the Marchioness, "she was a school fellow of Maria's, a poor stupid thing as ever lived, *pretending* to be so good and so gentle, that she was just like a methodist,

and was as fond of this Fanny, before she went abroad, as Miss Stanhope, but had not so spirited a way of shewing it.'

"Where is your ladyship going into the country?" said the lady that spoke first, addressing Lady Maria.

"We are going to Pemberton Abbey; Lady Ellincourt gave us leave to make what use we pleased of it in her absence; and the Colonel seems to wish me to stay there the few months he intends being Ireland."

"Is the Colonel going to Ireland directly?"

"Oh no, he intends remaining at Pemberton Abbey for three weeks or a month, and then going back with Lord Ballafyn, who is now in England, and returns to Ireland at that time."

"Is Pemberton Abbey a pretty place?"

"I really don't know, for I was never there, but Fanny speaks of it in raptures," said Lady Maria.

"It was part of the rich Hamilton's estate," said the talkative lady, "at least I believe so, I think Lady Ellincourt said she bought it of Mr. Hamilton's executors, I don't mean the Mr. Hamilton we were talking of just now, because you know he is alive: but he only inherited as legatee, he was no relation to the old gentleman, I understand; did your ladyship ever hear why old Mr. Hamilton went abroad?"

"Never," answered Lady Maria; "I did hear Lady Ellincourt say there was some melancholy cause, but as I hate sad stories, I never asked any questions: was it any thing very shocking?"

"Oh, yes! he had only one child, and that was a son; but he was *lost* when he was just come of age, and never heard of since."

"Surely," exclaimed Lady Maria, "that must be impossible; how could a young man of that age be lost, unless indeed it was at sea?"

"Oh no, it was not at sea; he was one of the finest young men that ever was seen, and every body loved him that knew him, poor Mr. Hamilton perfectly idolized him; it is a great many years ago, I am ashamed to say I remember it, for it makes one appear so shockingly old, but I really do. Oh dear, there was nothing else talked of at the time, and some thought one thing, and some thought another; but nothing ever came out, and it hurt poor old Hamilton so much, that he went abroad, and would never come home again, and he died in the West Indies, I believe."

"What a very extraordinary story," said Lady Maria, "but how came the old gentleman to give his money to this Mr. Hamilton, if he is no relation to him."

"Indeed, my dear, I don't know, but I suppose he met with him when he was just going into his dotage, and he played his cards well, and got on the weak side of the old man; I hear this Hamilton is very clever."

"As he is of the same name, I should suppose," said Lady Maria, "that he pretended to be related to the Hamilton family."

"Oh no, my dear, he took the name of Hamilton for the estates: he is a Creole, they say, and was never in England till now."

"How long ago is it since the son disappeared?" said Lady Maria.

"My dear creature, what a shocking question, when I have just told you *I* recollect the circumstance; but however, I may as well tell you, it is nineteen years ago, I was then just a bride; dear me, it seems only yesterday!—Have you heard that Mr. H. is going to be married?"

"*I* know nothing about it," said Lady Maria, with an air of ennui, for Mrs. Ellis had tired her with her circumstantial narrative. The entrance of Miss Stanhope and Fanny put an end to the

conversation, and as soon as tea was over, the whole party adjourned to the Opera, attended by the Duke of Albemarle, the Marquises of Petersfield and Cheviotdale, and Col. Ross.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Opera.

The two ladies who accompanied the Marchioness of Petersfield's family party to the Opera, had a box adjoining her ladyship's, and as that could boast a better view of the stage, Miss Stanhope accepted their offer of sitting there, in preference to the Marchioness's, and as she was known to be inseparable from Fanny, a seat was also offered to her.

The first act was nearly over when they entered the house, and the first object that struck Fanny on her entrance, was Mr. Hamilton, sitting in the pit, with his arms folded across his breast, and his eyes pensively fixed upon the part of the house where their box was situated. He instantly recognized Fanny, and rising from his seat, made her a low bow; confused beyond measure at this public salute, the deepest crimson covered her cheeks; but she, nevertheless, returned the compliment by a slight inclination of the head.

This did not pass unobserved by Col. Ross, who was in the back part of the box, talking to Lord Cheviotdale, and exclaimed in the first

ebullition of fury, "Curse the fellow." Col. Ross was unconscious that he had spoken aloud, until Lord Cheviotdale, whose eyes had followed the Colonel's, as it glanced at the object of his anger, asked him with surprise, "if he meant Mr. Hamilton? but," added his Lordship, recollecting himself, "that is impossible, for every body that knows Mr. Hamilton, likes him."

"I know very little of that gentleman," said the Colonel, "nor do I wish to increase the acquaintance, for he resembles a person I detest, and it was that likeness which forced from my lips the aposthrophe that surprised you."

"By Heavens!" rejoined Lord Cheviotdale, "if Hamilton be like any one who is unamiable, it *can* be only an *exterior* resemblance; therefore, to do away such an unjust prejudice, I shall immediately fetch him hither, and I will bet ten thousand pounds you recant your unfavourable opinion in half an hour afterwards."

The Marquis did not wait for Colonel Ross to answer; but, quitting the box, made his way into the pit, and returned in a very few minutes accompanied by Mr. Hamilton.

"I have fulfilled my promise," said his Lordship, addressing the Marchioness of Petersfield, "here is Mr. Hamilton, drawn hither by the ardent desire he feels to be introduced to your ladyship."

The Marchioness put on one of her most gracious looks, and replied, "that she should esteem herself happy in the honour of Mr. Hamilton's acquaintance."

Col. Ross bit his lip, and received his share of the introductory ceremony with stiff politeness.

Miss Stanhope looked at Lord Cheviotdale with an air of reproach, who instantly understood the hint, and whispering to Mr. Hamilton, led him into the adjoining box, where he renewed

the ceremony of introduction, both to Miss Stanhope and her friend.

The ladies, who were in the same box, were acquainted with Mr. Hamilton, and gave him so cordial a reception, that he accepted their invitation to take a seat in their box, and placing himself behind Fanny, he addressed the chief part of his conversation to her and Miss Stanhope, whose lively sallies seemed to please him much, and often awakened a sweet smile upon his pensive countenance.

There was solid sense in every thing Mr. Hamilton said, and he expressed himself in such elegant language, that Fanny listened to him with delight, whilst her soft eyes beamed upon him, a look of the sweetest complacency.

The Duke of Albemarle, who was in the box adjoining, had watched Fanny with all the tortures of jealousy, from the first moment of Mr. Hamilton's introduction; and when he read upon her intelligent countenance such unequivocal proofs of her admiration of the man he deemed his rival, he could scarcely rein-in his rage and indignation.

Alarmed lest his emotions should betray him, he left the box, and endeavoured to recover his self-command by a walk in the adjoining saloon.

Sir Everard Mornington was at the Opera that evening, and as soon as he espied Miss Stanhope, he hastened to join her party.

Sir Everard was one of those lively people who are at home every where and acquainted with every body; he entered the box therefore without ceremony, and after a slight nod and "*how do*" to Amelia, he began a long story to one of the old ladies, about a narrow escape he had experienced in the morning, having been thrown out of a dog-cart tandem which he was

driving, to the imminent risk of his own neck, and the total demolition of the poor woman's wheelbarrow that had caused the accident, by crossing the street just at the moment young *Jehu* was driving down Bond-street, in the true style of *prime and bang up!*

"Good heavens!" said Miss Stanhope, "you talk so shockingly, that positively I shall be nervous whenever I see any body driving a tandem or four-in hand again."

"Don't alarm yourself," replied her lover, "there is nothing so delightful to a man of spirit as a hair-breadth escape now and then; it gives him *eclat.* Now this accident will be in all the papers, and I shall be the topic of conversation for these *three* days. I wish I had broken my collar-bone or dislocated my arm, or some snug little accident; that would have been *prime,* for there must have been a *bulletin,* and all my friends, or at least my *soi-disant* friends, *must* have been *very sorry,* whether they would or not."

Miss Stanhope laughed; "you are the first person," said she, "I ever heard wish to break their bones, or dislocate their joints, for the sake of notoriety, and I think, as you are so ambitious of fame, you had better join the army in Portugal, and there you may stand a fair chance of having your head taken off in a celebrated manner by a cannon ball, or of losing some of your limbs at least."

"Losing a *limb* or so might be very well, if it happened in England, but as to the *head,*" replied Sir Everard, "the loss of *that* would *spoil* all, for there would be no occasion for a *bulletin;* and as services abroad are equally preclusive of that delightful oblation to vanity, I will serve my country at *home,* by encouraging its breed of horses, employing its mechanics in building car-

riages, and gratifying the most beautiful part of its population by sporting my elegant figure in all the paraphernalia of a modern son of the whip. When, encouraged by their approving glances, I become invincible to the dangers of my *elevated station,* and *squaring* my elbows, I *handle* the *ribbons,* and *tip* my *tits* in *their traces,* such a *dasher,* that we are prime and bang up beyond all competition."

Miss Stanhope was not deficient in sense, and yet she was charmed with a jargon that had not a particle of that quality to boast of.

There is no accounting for partialities between the sexes, as it may very frequently be observed, that persons of the most opposite tastes and propensities will select each other, and consider it indispensible to their mutual happiness to be united.

The b illiant alliance which fortune seemed to offer her in her union with the Duke, had no attraction in her eyes; nor could his Grace's elegant person, his fine understanding, nor the fascination of his manners, tempt her for a moment to forego her choice.

Sir Everard Mornington was a fine healthy-looking young man, and might perhaps have displayed something like a *mind,* had studying been the fashion instead of driving; but the company he had been obliged to keep, in order to attain any degree of perfection in the science he was ambitious to shine in, had as completely vulgarised his ideas, as the quaint dress of the natty coachman had disfigured his naturally fine person.

Yet still in Miss Stanhope's eyes, he was all perfection; and as she was no less agreeable to him, there had been an explanation between them that had developed their views to each other.

A clandestine marriage had been decided on,

and the giddy couple anticipated with delight the noise their elopement would make in the great world.

Sir Everald was rich, and therefore Miss Stanhope's fortune was not his object in addressing her; and when she explained to him the clause in her father's will, which made her fortune the penalty of her refusing to marry the Duke of Albemarle, he laughed, and told her, "he thought it would be prime to *tip* the *knowing ones* the *go-by*, and shew them they had more spirit than to mind what old musty parchments said, that helped to do the mischief the old quizes that made them could not live to finish."

But to return to the Opera-house. Mr. Hamilton, in the course of the conversation, learnt that Fanny was going out of town, and when Miss Stanhope named Lady Ellincourt's seat in Yorkshire, he clapped his hand to his forehead, and exclaimed, "Heavens, what a circumstance!"

"Do you know that part of the world," said Miss Stanhope, whose curiosity had been raised by the exclamation.

"Know it!" rejoined Mr. Hamilton, "Oh, would to God I had never known it!"

Miss Stanhope was alarmed, for she thought Mr. Hamilton was insane, as his eyes rolled for several minutes with a wildness truly terrific. "I thought," said she, endeavouring to turn the conversation, "that you were a stranger in this country, Sir and had been in England only a few months."

"Most true," replied Mr. Hamilton, seeming to recover himself a little, "I am a stranger in this country: I have no *existence here*, but I am trespassing on your attention, ladies," continued he, turning to Miss Stanhope and Fanny, "whilst more pleasing objects demand it; the name of the estate that formerly belonged to my deceased

friend, awakened ideas most painful to recall but it is over, and I entreat your pardon."

It was in vain that Mr. Hamilton recommended to Miss Stanhope and Fanny to give their attention to the Opera, *he* had fixed it for the night, and they could neither of them hear or see any other person. As to Fanny, she was affected beyond measure, by the anguish expressed on the countenance of her new friend, and she found it difficult to restrain the tears that were ready to drop from her eyes. Mr. Hamilton perceived her emotion, and fearful lest it should attract the notice of the ladies around her, he arose from his seat, and quitted the box. The Duke of Albemarle entered as he did so, and placing himself behind Fanny, he remained stationary until the party quitted the theatre.

It was in vain, however, that he addressed his conversation to Fanny, or indeed to Miss Stanhope, so lost were they in conjectures as to the possible cause of Mr. Hamilton's sorrow, that a monosyllable was the utmost the Duke could obtain in answer to any thing that he said! Inflamed with jealousy, and exasperated beyond the bounds of prudence, he seized Fanny's arm as she was entering the coffee-room, and darting at her a look of anger, he said in a tone of voice that spoke his inward emotion; "inexorable girl, forbear to trifle thus with my happiness—remember my life is in your hands: never will I marry any other woman!"

"Then you will *die single*," said a harsh voice behind him, and at the same moment he felt a hand grasp his arm with violence. He turned round, and beheld Lord Somertown, who immediately obliged him to quit Fanny, and go with him.

"I came hither," said his Lordship, "in search of my nephew, little imagining what a *fool* I was looking for."

Ashamed and confused, beyond expression, the Duke suffered himself to be led away by Lord Somertown, (who had taken hold of his arm) to his carriage, without proffering a single word. His uncle was silent also for some time after they were seated in the chariot, at length however, he spoke :—"I had formed a better opinion of your understanding," said his Lordship. "A man may *trifle* with as many women as he pleases, but when he so far forgets himself as to talk of marriage, he deserves to be posted for a blockhead. An intrigue with the companion of your intended wife is most ridiculously indiscreet, and particularly so before you are *secure* of her. It is not morality I am preaching to you, for you already know my opinion on that subject; all I wish to inculcate is a *prudent* regard to my wishes and your own interest; I have set my mind upon this union, and if it fails through your delinquency, woe unto the frail cause of it! You know me, Henry, take care then how you offend me; if you value the painted puppet you were pretending to worship in that fulsome strain of idolatry, beware of drawing down my displeasure upon her. If I thought she stood in the way of your marriage with Miss Stanhope, by heavens, I would annihilate her. She should vanish from your fascinated eyes, nor leave a trace of her insignificant existence behind her."

The Duke shuddered as he listened to Lord Somertown's threatening language, for well did he know that if the *power* were lent him, he did not want the *will* to execute the direst vengeance on those he deemed his enemies. The bare idea of exposing the lovely Fanny to his uncle's fury, was dreadful to him, and he resolved to dissemble his real sentiments under a shew of obedience. "I am concerned," said he, hesitat-

ing from the consciousness of a duplicity to which his soul was a stranger; "I am concerned that your lordship should mistake a little unmeaning gallantry, shewn to a beautiful young woman, for a serious attachment; I have told your lordship that it was my wish to marry Miss Stanhope, and I now assure you that I still admire the same lady that then occupied my heart, in preference to all others, and if I don't marry Amelia Stanhope, the impediment to our union will not originate in *me*."

"Bravo!" exclaimed Lord Somertown, "if you are sincere it is well, but think not that I am to be deceived by a stripling like you. That girl is an artful creature, who has her views in her pretended coyness; but I repeat, beware how you let me suspect any thing serious in that quarter. Remember, it will be at the peril of your *minion*."

The Duke again affirmed that he was as ready to fulfil the contract with Miss Stanhope, and Lord Somertown was, or at least, appeared to be, satisfied.

When, however, he retired to his apartment, the agitation of the Duke's mind was intolerable; he had pledged his word to his uncle to marry Miss Stanhope, provided she was willing to accept him as a husband; and although the promise was extorted by his fears for Fanny's safety, he could not for an instant conceive the possibility of forfeiting his word, should she, contrary to her solemn assurances, place no barrier in the way of their nuptials. "Good heavens!" said he, "what would become of me should I find myself entangled in a net of my own weaving. Amelia has promised to render our marriage impossible; is she then bethrothed to another? and does she mean to evade her union with me, by running away with her favourite

lover? Alas! her schemes may be rendered abortive by the vigilance of her guardians, and between threats and persuasion, she may be brought to consent to the annihilation of my happiness. Well, should that be the case, I must console myself by reflecting that my fears for the adored object of my affection, led me to the fatal sacrifice. Had I appeared irresolute, or hesitated in answering my uncle, his vengeance would have fallen on the defenceless Fanny, and then the agony of my soul would have been too much for me to support. No, I have acted in the only way that was left me to insure her safety, and if that were purchased with my life, it were cheaply bought. But I will cherish better hopes, Amelia Stanhope is generous, she will be faithful, and I shall yet possess the power of addressing the only woman I can ever love."

With these reflections, fluctuating between hope and fear, the Duke passed a sleepless night, and arose the next morning dispirited and pale from the anxiety that still preyed upon his spirits.

In the mean time Fanny had not been much more calm, but her agitation had not originated in the same cause, for love had nothing to do with the emotions that harassed her mind; an interest that she could not define was excited in her heart for Mr. Hamilton, and it was with a mixture of terror and joy that she received the following note from him, as he was assisting her to get into the Marchioness of Petersfield's carriage. She counted the minutes until she was alone, and free to peruse it, for she would not trust even Miss Stanhope with the knowledge of her having received it. The instant her lively friend had bid her good night, she tore open the seal with a trembling hand, and read the following mysterious words:—

"You are going to Pemberton Abbey, so am I; and I trust we shall there find an opportunity of meeting without spies or intruders; I want to tell you the history of my eventful life; something whispers me that you are interested in it, beyond what you at present suspect; oh! should it prove so—what bliss for both of us! I dare not trust the thought. Farewell, until we meet again."

CHAPTER XXII.

Tête-a-Tête.

The agitation excited in the bosom of Fanny; by the reading of Mr. Hamilton's note, did not easily subside. The words contained in it, implied a mystery that awakened every feeling of her heart, should she indeed find a parent! The idea was insupportable; for although inspired by hope, it was unsanctioned by reason; and she felt that to part with the sweet expectation, however vague or unfounded, would now cost her very dear. The whole of the night wore away in unavailing conjecture, and the morning found her agitation as much bewildered in the labyrinth of uncertainty, as when she laid her aching head upon the pillow. She was obliged, however, to conceal her emotions, lest any step should be taken to prevent the promised interview. The few succeeding days that intervened between the Opera and her departure for Pemberton Abbey, were engrossed by preparations for the journey, and although Amelia tried every stratagem to get Fanny to come to

her at the Marquis of Petersfield's, she could not succeed, and she quitted London without seeing the Duke of Albemarle, who did not dare to make any attempt to obtain that pleasure, except by visiting Amelia frequently, in the hope of meeting her there. Disappointment was constantly his portion, however; and Lord Somertown, whose vigilance had never slept since his suspicions were first awakened, was convinced that Fanny left town without any communication having passed between them. That vindictive nobleman had long been conversant in the best method of employing spies, and when he wished to ascertain any fact relative to those who had incurred his displeasure, he spared neither pains nor expence to obtain the information he wanted. Poor Fanny was now the object of his vengeance, and his intended victim; and he took care to surround the steps of the hapless girl with creatures devoted to his service, and willing to assist his most diabolical plans for the sake of obtaining a continuation of the bribes that had perverted their principles. There is a God, however, whose all-seeing wisdom can penetrate the darkest machination of cunning, and whose power can protect the weakest of his creatures against a host of enemies. That merciful Being was now watching over the seemingly unprotected Fanny, and viewing with an eye of stern displeasure the dark plots of her insidious foes.

Lady Maria Ross was but an indifferent traveller, and as the weather was warm, and the journey of more than two hundred and fifty miles in length, it was determined that the family should sleep two nights on the road. The first day's journey ended at a lone inn, nearly a hundred miles from town, in a spot so romantically beautiful, that Fanny was enchanted with the rich scenery around it, displayed by a clear

moon, now nearly at the full, in a more interesting landscape than when gilt by the sun-beams of "*the garish eye of day.*" Instead, therefore, of retiring to bed when she entered her room for the night, she continued at one of the windows, contemplating with delight the beautiful prospect, until a clock, from a distant church, struck one; she was then thinking of seeking her pillow, but as she was receding from the window, her eyes rested on the tall figure of a man, who appeared to be gazing at the spot where she stood; his attitude was so fixed, that she imagined he had been there some time, although she had not before observed him; but whether he could distinguish her or not, she could not ascertain, as no sign on his part implied any consciousness of her existence. The sight, however, of a human being at that dreary hour, and in that lone situation, for the stilness of the house had long since proclaimed that its inhabitants were wrapped in the arms of sleep, gave her a sensation of alarm, that made her close her window with precipitation, and drawing the curtain that shaded it, she hastily prepared for bed.

Before she entered that mansion of repose, however, she stole another glance from the window, to satisfy herself whether the figure was still there. It had vanished from the spot where she had first seen it, but although the declining beams of the moon cast a broad shadow over one part of the scene, she was soon able to distinguish it standing close under her window, and with looks cast upwards as if observing her chamber. A handkerchief applied to the face, completely shrouded the features from her ken, had he stood in the light, but the dark spot he had chosen, rendered that caution unnecessary. As Fanny perceived the figure, she uttered a faint scream, and put her hand before her eyes. When she

again withdrew it, the apparition had vanished, and although she watched until another hour resounded from the village turret, she beheld it no more.

It would be a vain task to attempt to describe the variety of conjectures, which occupied the mind of Fanny, through the wakeful hours that succeeded this mysterious vision: sometimes she was inclined to believe, that *she* was not concerned in its appearance; but the next moment she rejected that idea, and felt an instinctive conviction, that it portended the vigilant observation of some friend or foe.—And yet she did not stand in need of an act of friendship, attended with such apparent inconvenience to the person who performed it. And as to a *foe*, she was unconscious that she had one. At length, overcome with fatigue and watching, she dropped into a deep slumber, from which she did not awake until a hasty summons to breakfast informed her how much she had trespassed beyond the usual hour of rising. The bustle occasioned by over-sleeping herself broke the train of her thoughts, and rendered her fitter to meet the family at the breakfast table. The journey of that day was unmolested by any incident, and again the travellers rested at a lone house. It was always Col. Ross's custom when he slept on the road, to avoid towns, and the inns he had selected to repose at on this journey, were every way calculated to make his choice approved; they were replete with every convenience for the accommodation of a large family, and the spots where they stood, the most picturesque that can be imagined. Fanny had been struck with the beauty of the scenery surrounding that where she passed the first night, but when she viewed the situation of the second inn, she was still more enchanted, and she could not forbear exclaiming, as

she alighted from the carriage, that she never saw such a paradise before. Lady Maria was no enthusiast, either in poetry or painting, and therefore she viewed the wild beauties of the majestic hills, the rich luxuriance of the scattered woods, and all the magic beauty of the fairy landscape, with a sang-froid that astonished Fanny, whose every faculty appeared strained to catch the prospect that delighted her. The moon was risen in its full splendour, by the time tea was over.

"Oh how I should like a walk this delightful evening," said Fanny, thoughtlessly, "if it were not for the fear of ——," she stopped short, and blushing exceedingly, recollected that she had determined not to mention the nocturnal apparition that had alarmed her.

"The fear of what?" repeated Colonel Ross, "what fear can you have, Fanny, that need prevent your taking a walk such an evening as this, provided I escort you."

"Oh none, to be sure," replied she, "I only meant, that I should be afraid to walk alone."

"Alone, certainly, would not be proper," said the Colonel, "but there can be no objection to your going well attended——Maria, will you accompany us?"

"Oh no," answered her ladyship, "the fatigue of the journey is quite enough for me, I am not such an admirer of nature, nor have I such a romantic turn for moon-light contemplations as Fanny." This was spoken in a tone of splenetic fretfulness, that betrayed Lady Maria's displeasure at the Colonel's proposal, and Fanny immediately declared that she would not go, nor could the eloquence exerted by the Colonel induce her to accept his offer of attending her. He appeared piqued at her refusal, and muttered something between his teeth of self-willed girls.

Poor Fanny was glad to escape from her com.

panions, who were neither of them in good humour, and therefore she retired early to her chamber. "At least," said she, as she seated herself at her window, "*here* I need not fear that I shall be disturbed by the *apparition*, he has scarcely ridden hither on the wings of the wind, to disturb my nocturnal contemplations!"

The room that Fanny inhabited, looked into a small garden, from whence a flight of steps reached to a balcony close under her window; the bustle of the inn had not yet subsided, but the sounds were distant, for the apartment she occupied was at the end of the corridor, and quite remote from the interior of the house.

A beautiful champaign country opened to her view at the extremity of the garden. On the left were seen scattered woods, bounded by lofty hills, so varied in size, that they appeared, as the moon silvered their majestic points, as if they were rising emulous of reflecting her lustrous beams.

To the right, on a bold eminence, and unadorned by even a single tree, to soften the stern aspect of the picture, rose the majestic ruins of an ancient castle, which seemed in sullen pride to frown upon the sons of little men, who now dared to tread the sacred spot, where once flourished heroes unbending and invincible.

At the proud battlements that entrenched them, Fanny gazed with delight, as the clear moon darted her silver radiance through the dismantled windows, and ivy-clad loop-holes of the gloomy tower. The scene was solemn and sublime, and calculated to raise the enthusiastic imagination of youth to the highest pitch of mental enjoyment; by degrees the noise in the house died away, and the calm stillness was unbroken, save that at intervals the distant watch-dog barked at some casual straggler within the precincts of his nightly care.

Fanny was in raptures; she had extinguished her candle, that its light might not expose her to the observation of any distant wanderer. Her eye dwelt alternately on the rich forest, the hills bright with the rays of the moon, and the frowning castle proud, and in majestic loneliness.

And that *seeing* might not be the only sense, a woodbine, whose luxuriant branches covered the walls of the house, and breathed fragrance around, now intruded some of its spicy flowers within the open casement? Fanny inhaled the balmy gale as the night breeze shook its dewy wings around her, and entranced in an ecstacy of enjoyment, she sat unmindful of the waning night, until a clock striking *one*, roused her from her pleasing reverie; the hour reminded her of the figure she had seen the preceding night, and so strong was the power of fancy upon her mind, that her eye mechanically sought it in the scene before her. She looked however in vain: the most profound stillness reigned, and the clear rays of the moon displayed nothing but inanimate objects to her view.—"No," said she, speaking aloud, unconscious that she did so, "No, he has not followed me here—alas! I fear my imagination misleads me, and the fairy vision it has conjured up, to delight, will melt into *Æther*." As she spoke she cast her eyes towards the castle, and fancied she saw something emerge from one of its delapidated portals; she was soon convinced that she was right, for she beheld the same tall figure she had seen the preceding night, moving towards the garden, that skirted the inn. Although she had almost *wished* to see it, an indistinct horror seized her as she gazed upon its approaching footsteps, and she was going to retire from the window, when she thought she heard a name pronounced distinctly, though in a low voice, under her window: startled at the

sound, she leant forward to ascertain whence it proceeded, and to her astonishment beheld Colonel Ross standing in the balcony beneath. "What can be the cause of this nocturnal watching?" said he, rather sternly; "this is the second time I have been witness to your sitting up half the night at your window."

"The extreme beauty of the surrounding scenery attracted me to my window to view it," replied Fanny, "and when I had once indulged in the contemplation, I found it impossible to leave it; there is nothing extraordinary sure in that, when you recollect what an enthusiastic admirer I am of the beauties of nature."

"Nature has a *variety* of beauties, most undoubtedly," replied the Colonel, "and I suppose the fortunate being you aposthrophized just now is one of them, is he not?"

"I am astonished," replied Fanny, "that you should think it worth while to watch me, and listen under my window, Sir, at an hour, when it appears so strange to you that *I* should be watching!"

"Your astonishment would cease," rejoined he, "could you know the real state of my heart; could you know that the most trivial of your actions is important in my eyes, but when I think you are about to bestow upon a favoured lover that heaven of love, which I am determined no man but myself shall possess and *live!* it is *then* that every feeling of my soul is harrowed up, every energy awakened, and the hurricane of passion transports me beyond the boundary of reason and prudence."

"This language is certainly unfit for me to listen to," interrupted Fanny, with dignity, "and strange and incomprehensible as your allusions are, Sir, I forbear to question you." So saying,

she shut down the window, and left the Colonel to the enjoyment of his own reflections.

It may readily be supposed that they were none of the pleasantest; hurried away by the emotion of the moment, he had made a premature discovery of a passion he had hitherto concealed with such caution, and he knew enough of Fanny to be certain that he had incurred her indignation, if not her abhorrence, by so infamous an avowal.

In the mean time she retired from the window, overwhelmed by feelings of resentment and distress impossible to describe; she had always felt a secret antipathy to Colonel Ross, which was now justified by his atrocious conduct; her heart had often reproached her for the ungrateful return she made to the continual acts of kindness she experienced from him, and she had often endeavoured to conquer a dislike she thought founded in caprice. It was now proved, however, that her repugnance to his friendship was the instinct of a mind too pure and delicate to assimilate with his; which, though veiled beneath the specious mask of hypocrisy, was the seat of every vice that deforms human nature.

"Oh, Lady Ellincourt! my beloved benefactress," exclaimed Fanny, clasping her hands together in an agony of distress, "to what a care have you confided your unhappy girl? Ah! little does Lord Ellincourt think what a villain is honoured with the *name* of his *friend!* Return, dear protectors of my infancy, return and restore me once more! to happiness and security!"

Full of these thoughts, the disconsolate Fanny threw herself upon her bed, and vented her oppressed feelings in a flood of tears. When her emotions had in some measure subsided, she recollected the figure she had seen emerging from

the Castle, and she longed to ascertain whether it was really the same that she had seen the preceding night. She feared, however, to go to the window, lest Colonel Ross should be still beneath it, and mistake her motive, by imagining she came thither to look for him. This consideration restrained her curiosity, and she went to bed without stealing one glance from the window. The next morning when she was ready to descend to breakfast, she felt the greatest awkwardness at the idea of meeting Colonel Ross, nor did she entertain a doubt that *his* confusion would at least equal her's, if not exceed it. What was her astonishment then, when on entering the room where Lady Maria and he were already at breakfast, she beheld him, his brow armed with frowns, and heard him in a tone of reproachful authority, reprimand her for her late attendance at the breakfast table; "this tardiness," added he, "is owing no doubt to your *nocturnal watchings*, but I warn you, Miss Fanny, that I will have no such doings whilst you are under our protection.

Struck dumb by the astonishment that had seized her, Fanny seated herself at the table, without uttering a word; but she felt equally unable to eat as to speak.

Lady Maria observed her distress, and good-naturedly wished to relieve it. "My dear Fanny," said she, "do not let the Colonel's reprimand distress you so; he only speaks for your good. His anxiety for your welfare makes him perhaps, too scrupulous about trifles. You had been expressing your admiration of moon-light scenery; it was therefore natural you should indulge yourself with a *look*, as you could not take a *walk*."

"The admiring a moon-light scene from her

chamber window, is certainly no *crime*," said the Colonel, "if to *admire that* were the motive that carried her there; but when it is to converse with a stranger, an *adventurer*, a person that nobody knows, and one, of whose doubtful character she has received ample warning; that a young lady leaves her quiet pillow, and exposes herself at the dead hour of the night to the dangers of such an assignation, then, indeed, the case is altered, and the seemingly simple action deserves the severest reprehension."

Fanny's surprise gave way to her indignation, when she found herself thus daringly accused of a thing she had not even dreamt of.

"I cannot express," said she, "the astonishment that has seized me, to find such a palpable falsehood imputed to me. I cannot even guess what Col. Ross alludes to, as I solemnly declare that I conversed with no man from my window; had made appointment with no man; and therefore cannot possibly deserve the Colonel's allegations against me."

"Good heavens," exclaimed the Colonel, striking his hands together with well feigned astonishment, "I did not think you were capable of such duplicity. Surely, Miss Fanny, you will not tell me that I did not *hear* you speaking to a man from your window? That I did not hear that man declare the most ardent passion for you, and swear that no other should ever possess you and *live*? You will not have the effrontery to deny *that*."

Fanny was thunderstruck to hear the very words repeated by the Colonel which he had himself made use of to her, and which she supposed he would have trembled to find remembered, turned as an accusation against herself.

It was an audacity in villainy too mighty for

her to cope with; she could only lift her hands and eyes in silent wonder.

"I know," continued the Colonel, "the fellow that is taking such pains to follow you; it is the man who made acquaintance with you in Hyde Park, when I came so opportunely to save you from the consequences of your folly."

"The gentleman who rescued me from the impertinence of a rude stranger," said Fanny, "is Mr. Hamilton, and as much distinguished for his politeness as his riches. Surely he cannot deserve the epithets you bestow upon him, Sir."

"The person who imposes himself upon you for Mr. Hamilton, is not that gentleman," said the Colonel, "he only resembles that gentleman in person, and makes use of that likeness to impose upon the unwary."

"As I am acquainted with only one Mr. Hamilton," replied Fanny, "his resemblance to another whom I never saw, could avail him nothing with me."

"You seem inclined to vindicate your conduct rather than confess your error," said the Colonel, sternly, "but I would wish you to recollect, Miss Fanny, that as Lady Ellincourt entrusted you to our guardianship, during her absence, it behoves us to watch over your conduct; and if Lady Maria chuses to allow you such latitude, I don't; and I give you notice that your *nocturnal lover* will be treated with the severity he deserves, if he is found lurking about Pemberton Abbey."

"If the man who was so daring as to declare a passion for me, last night, in defiance to decency and morality," said Fanny, "if he can be found, I think he cannot be treated with more severity than he deserves; with more contempt than I feel for him."

"'Tis well," said the Colonel, his eyes flashing fury, "I am glad I know your sentiments, madam;

and you may depend upon it I will act accordingly."

Fanny involuntarily trembled as she listened to this menace, though she could not possibly conceive what it was intended to convey.

Lady Maria looked surprised, and endeavoured, with a good-humoured laugh, to turn the conversation to something more agreeable. Though subject to little gusts of fractiousness, when her vanity was wounded, Lady Maria was naturally good natured, and her kind heart was pained by Fanny's evident distress. Her efforts, however, proved all in vain; the Colonel preserved a sullen silence, whilst tears of real anguish and dismay bedewed the cheeks of the unhappy Fanny.

But very little breakfast was eaten by any of the party; and the carriage being announced as in readiness for their departure, they began their journey in a frame of mind not likely to render it very pleasant.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Pemberton Abbey.

During the *silent* ride that ensued, Fanny's ideas were occupied by the most painful reflections, the most anxious uncertainty.

Col. Ross had spoken as if he was certain that he knew the person whose appearance for two nights had excited her curiosity so greatly; the figure had seemed to her eye to resemble that

of Mr. Hamilton; but it was impossible for her to ascertain if it were really him or not, as his face had never been revealed to her view. He had promised to see her at Pemberton Abbey, in the letter she had received from him just before she left London; but there appeared no probability that he could have followed her steps with such exactitude upon the road, as to rest every night at the same spot, and without being observed during the day; nor did there appear any reasonable motive for his lurking about the precincts of the inn at the dead hour of the night, without knowing that she would be at her chamber window, if it was really her he wanted to speak to.

The *field* of *conjecture* is boundless; and Fanny's imagination wandered in it until it was weary; nor could it draw a single conclusion from its researches, to rest upon, after the fatiguing exertion.

Towards the close of the day the turrets of Pemberton Abbey struck the eyes of the travellers as they ascended a steep hill, from the summit of which they beheld the rich valley where that venerable edifice was situate.

An exclamation of pleasure burst involuntarily from the lips of Fanny, as she recognized the spot where she had passed so many happy days with her beloved Lady Ellincourt, whilst her heightened colour and sparkling eyes betrayed the emotions of her heart.

"You are a happy girl, Fanny," said Lady Maria, smiling; "your romantic admiration of beautiful scenery seems to give you real delight."

"It is not mere admiration that excites my pleasure now," replied Fanny; "the recollection of dear friends has its share in the sweet sensation. The sight of Pemberton Abbey brings the happiest moments of my life to my remem-

brance; and I can scarcely persuade myself that the dear lady I long to embrace, will not be there to receive me. Oh, if she were, what happiness would be mine!"

"The scene of happiness would be *incomplete*," said Colonel Ross, with a sneer, "unless the *Dear Lord* were there as well as the *Dear Lady!*"

"Most true," answered Fanny; "Lord Ellincourt is almost as dear to my heart as his amiable mother. I am not sure whether he is not *quite* as dear. The debt of gratitude, to his lordship, has the claim of *priority*. But for *his* goodness, I should never have known that revered lady."

"You must take care *now*," said Colonel Ross, "how you make such unequivocal confessions of *loving* his lordship. *Young* Lady Ellincourt may not like it, perhaps, so well as the Dowager did."

"The love I bear Lord Ellincourt," replied Fanny, blushing, "can never give offence to any body, and I am sure, least of all, to the sweet lady you allude to."

"I am glad to hear it is of such a nature," replied Colonel Ross, sarcastically. "I merely spoke with the wish of cautioning you against professions of regard that might give rise to jealousy, should Lady Ellincourt be one of those *narrow-minded women* who wish to keep their husbands to themselves."

"Did every one consider the marriage vow in the same sacred light that *I* do," replied Fanny, "there would need no caution against an infringement of its rights."

As she spoke, her cheeks glowed with indignation, and she cast a look of disdain at Colonel Ross that cut him to the soul. Yet, although it awakened remorse in his depraved mind, it did

not stimulate repentance, but rather served to inflame that desire of revenge which was already kindled in his bosom.

Lady Maria seemed lost in astonishment as she listened in silence, to the dispute between her husband and Fanny. The asperity which was evident in the words of both, surprised her beyond measure. The kindness with which the Colonel had hitherto treated Fanny, making the change as wonderful on his side, as Fanny's native mildness did on her's.

Some secret motives must actuate both; but what it could possibly be remained impervious to the shallow capacity of the good-natured Lady Maria.

At length the arrival of the carriage at Pemberton Abbey, put a stop to conjecture and resentment; and the bustle of establishing themselves in their different apartments, procured amusement for all travellers.

Fanny's mind could now admit but one subject; it was wholly absorbed in reflections, on her absent friends, whose images, ever present in her grateful heart, were now more particularly brought before her eyes, by the thousand local circumstances calculated to recall the pleasing remembrance on the spot where their kindness, so often repeated, had endeared them to her.

The bed-room allotted for Fanny's use, was the one she had occupied when Lady Ellincourt was there; and as her ladyship's room was not chosen by Lady Maria, the whole suite of apartments were at Fanny's command, whose greatest pleasure now consisted in wandering through the forsaken chambers, gazing alternately on a picture of Lord Ellincourt, that was over the chimney of the dressing-room, and another of his amiable mother, which hung in the adjoining bed room. It seemed, as she contemplated the

senseless canvass, as if the features so admirably pourtrayed upon its surface, sympathized in the sufferings she complained of. Lady Ellincourt wore the expression of the tenderest pity, whilst those of her son appeared animated by the glow of spirited resentment.

"Dear shades of my distant protectors!" exclaimed Fanny, apostrophising the portraits she was looking at, "why can ye not now assist the forlorn object of your solicitude? Why am I doomed to suffer the tyranny of oppression, even in the very house where my infant heart first learnt the pleasing lessons of gratitude and affection? But why do I call myself forlorn? Am I not under the immediate protection of heaven? Can any power, however mighty, prevail against the arm of Omnipotence? To that benign guardianship I commend myself. And *he*, whose watchful eye makes even a sparrow fall, will not suffer confiding innocence to trust in vain."

With thoughts such as these did the artless Fanny endeavour to soothe her perturbed mind, and by placing a confidence in heaven, she soon found her terrors subside, and that peace which the world can neither give nor take away, became the inmate of her heart.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Painful Suspense.

It is time now to return to Miss Stanhope and the Duke of Albemarle, for whose nuptials every preparation went on with the utmost celerity.

To have seen Amelia in the midst of the crowd of milliners, dress makers, jewellers, &c. &c. that daily surrounded her, giving orders for the various articles of finery necessary to render her bridal pomp complete, nobody would have imagined that she was determined never to fulfil the contract for which she was preparing; indeed, that she had already put it out of her power to do so.

It is impossible to describe the anxiety of mind which the Duke of Albemarle suffered during the continuance of this suspense; for notwithstanding Miss Stanhope's promises to render the scheme of the marriage abortive, and her injunction to him to rely implicitly upon her faith, he could not divest himself wholly of doubt and distrust, and he would most assuredly have disclosed the truth to his uncle, had his own safety alone been endangered by so doing.

The Duke of Albemarle was naturally open and candid, and the part so full of duplicity which he had undertaken, pained him exceedingly.

Conversing one day with Lord Somertown, on the subject of his approaching marriage with Miss Stanhope, he became suddenly perplexed; his colour heightened, and his hesitating accents betrayed the perturbation of his breast. His uncle perceiving his confusion, and attributing it to his reluctance to marry Miss Stanhope, although he did not suspect his nephew of any intention to deceive him, he regarded him with a stern look, and speaking in that under-tone which is so expressive of deliberate malice, he said, "whatever may be your thoughts, Henry, of the union I have decided upon, tell them not to me; and beware how your actions betray a design to oppose my wishes. You are in the toil of the fowler, and cannot escape the mashes that enclose you. You will perhaps tell me, you despise poverty, and are fearless

of my displeasure. But answer me, boy, can you brave *death*? Not your own death, but the extinction of that painted butterfly you doat upon?" The Duke involuntarily shuddered. "Yes," continued Lord Somertown, "that *insect* is in my power, and I tell you *she dies*, instantly dies, should any act of disobedience on your part call down my vengeance upon her. I now leave you to your own decision. One step, one single step of your's will hurl your minion to destruction!"

Lord Somertown did not wait for the Duke's answer, but instantly quitting the room, left him to the meditations his horrible speech had excited.

It is impossible to describe the Duke's feelings, scarcely, indeed, could he analize them himself, such a mixture were they of anger and apprehension, indignation and anguish; like a lion struggling in the toils of the hunter, his rage could only be equalled by his grief at the total subversion of his power.

In regard to Lord Somertown's assertion, that he held Fanny in his power, the Duke, however, flattered himself that it was made only with a view to alarm him. The protection of Lady Maria Ross, he judged, was too respectable to admit any doubt of her actual safety, at least for the present, but he knew the cruel vindictive temper of his uncle too well to doubt that he would find some mode of revenging himself upon that hapless girl at some future opportunity, should any action of his nephew's seem to authorise the proceeding. Thus circumstanced, the Duke was under the necessity of committing himself to the guidance of Amelia, and to wait in trembling expectation the result of her scheme for dissolving the union. It was equally necessary that he should assume such an appearance of

tranquillity as was very foreign to the feelings of his heart, but which was indispensible if he hoped to impose upon his uncle.

The time, however, approached with rapid strides, and no action of Miss Stanhope's seemed to authorize the hopes she had given.

A thousand doubts disturbed the mind of her appointed bridegroom, who suffered without daring to complain. She saw, but took no notice of his sufferings, without it was to add to them by some little flippancy, some question relative to a future arrangement, that was made with such an air of seriousness as never failed to give added poignancy to his already irritated feelings. She would then laugh at his "*doleful looks*," as she called the appearance of anguish, that in spite of his best efforts, would steal over his features whilst suffering under the tortures of prolonged suspense.

"Your Grace gives me but a melancholy prospect," said she, one day, "when I try to peep over the matrimonial pale, by picturing to myself the felicity of our future conjugal *têtes-a-têtes*. That long face of yours would make an excellent model for a bust of Trophonias. I dare say a week of your company will have as good an effect upon my vivacity as a visit of the same length to the cave of that laughter-quelling gentleman. Depend upon it, I shall never even smile again after the holy noose is tied; so excuse me for making the best of my time now." And away ran the giddy girl, laughing at the poor Duke's distress in the most unmerciful manner.

At the signing of the marriage articles, the Duke of Albemarle expected that Amelia would make the promised declaration of her aversion to the proposed marriage; but to his unspeakable disappointment and surprize, Miss Stanhope appeared in more than usual spirits on the occa-

sion, and introduced a gentleman to witness the deed by his signature, to whom she said, she had promised that honour in a frolic, one day, and who now claimed the fulfilment of her promise with an earnestness she could not repress. Her guardian, and Lord Somertown, yielded to what they supposed a giddy whim, and Sir Everard Mornington (for he was the gentleman,) wrote his name where the lawyers directed him; nor did the Duke of Albemarle perceive any irregularity in the placing of the other names, although his Grace appeared to be poring over the fatal instrument longer than any other person present.

I will not pretend to describe what were his feelings when twelve o'clock the next day was fixed upon for his nuptials; nor attempt to delineate the agonized expression of his features when he was leading Miss Stanhope into the drawing-room, after the signature of the articles, she said in a half whisper, "I have succeeded even beyond my hopes; my happiness is now insured; and I hope to-morrow will appear to your Grace as it does to me, the harbinger of love and joy." The Duke endeavoured to make an answer, but the words died upon his lips, for as he looked up, he perceived his uncle observing him with fury sparkling in his eyes, and as he passed him, uttered these words, in an under voice—"I see your reluctance—your ungrateful delinquency; but beware, remember you are passing sentence upon your minion."

CHAPTER XXV.

The Nuptials.

After a sleepless night, the morning broke upon the Duke of Albemarle; no hint had been given him, by the merciless Amelia, to cheer his flagging spirits, and he now began to think himself the dupe of a mean artifice. "She saw my reluctance to marry her," said he, mentally, "and fearful lest my repugnance should surmount every other consideration, and induce me to declare my sentiments to Lord Somertown, she has stooped to the meanest of disguise to entrap me securely. The ducal coronet has greater charms in her eyes than honour or integrity. And shall I marry such a woman? No, every feeling of my soul recoils from the bare idea. How can I listen to that awful exhortation at the communion of the sacred ceremony? "As he shall answer at the great Day of Judgment!" Can I listen, I say, and then consent to rush on wilful perjury? Impossible! If, indeed, I am driven to that extremity, I will throw off the disguise that so ill conceals my feelings, even at the foot of the altar. But alas! what do I rave at? Lord Somertown will then wreak his vengeance upon the lovely object of my affection, and transfix my heart with a far keener shaft than any suffering inflicted on me alone. Yet surely I shall have time enough to warn her of her danger ere it can reach her."

With thoughts like these was the mind of the unhappy lover perplexed; and so absent was he to every thing relating to the business of the morning, that he made the whole party wait

above half an hour, by neglecting to dress himself in time. When he arrived at Lord Petersfield's, where the ceremony was to be performed, he found all the company assembled, and received a severe rebuke from Lord Somertown for his remissness."

"Make the best apology you can to your bride," said his lordship, "she deserves it of you, for she has borne your neglect with unparalleled good humour."

The Duke advanced to take Miss Stanhope's hand, who stooping forward, said in a low voice, whilst an arch smile played on her lips:

"*For a laggard in love, and a dastard in war,*
"*Was to wed the fair Ellen of young Lochinvar.*"

The Duke paid but little attention to her words, however, for his whole frame shook with agony, when he saw the Bishop of P——, who was waiting to perform the ceremony, open his book, and heard his voice, reading the awful exhortation just now alluded to. A mist seemed to cover his eyes, and a sickness seized his heart; for Amelia stood passively, and seemingly assenting to the compliance of the sacrifice. When, however, the Bishop made a little pause at the end of the solemn exordium, Amelia stepped forward: "Stop," said she, "that awful appeal to my sincerity demands a serious answer—you exhort me not to conceal any *impediment* that may forbid my union with Henry Pierrepoint, Duke of Albemarle, and I know of one that is *insurmountable*."

The whole company were struck with astonishment; the Duke's countenance brightened, but Lord Somertown clapping his hands together, exclaimed, "Some infernal plot has been hatching, but beware, boy, how you trifle with *me!*"

The Bishop commanded silence, by waving his hand, and then addressed Miss Stanhope.

"This is a strange time, madam," said he, in an impressive tone, "to start objections to a union to which you have hitherto appeared to assent; and let me tell you, with the candour that becomes my holy function, that you have been guilty of great levity, in suffering matters to go so far before you make known your objections to the marriage we are all met here to see solemnized. It is, nevertheless, necessary those objections should be known; I request therefore to hear them."

"I entreat your lordship not to censure my conduct," said Amelia, "under the impression, that *levity* induced me to act as I have done, since I can solemnly assure you, that I acted from a far better motive; the marriage which was to be cemented between the Duke of Albemarle and me, was a union of interest, projected by our friends, without consulting our inclinations, and from the first moment I was informed of the circumstance, I determined that it should never take place. Until very lately, I imagined that my fortune would be the forfeit of my disobedience; but I have lately been better informed, and I determined to be revenged of Lord Somertown for the artifice he had used to deceive me, by deceiving him in my turn, and making him come to my wedding, without marrying his nephew. I felt perfectly satisfied that the Duke would feel no disappointment in losing me, and therefore I have kept him in ignorance until this moment, for he believed, when he took my hand just now, that it was my intention to marry him. That, however, is no longer in my power, as I was married this morning to Sir Everard Mornington, the banns were regularly published, and we have been legally married at our parish

church, as that certificate will shew," producing one as she spoke.

"One thing, however," said Lord Somertown, interrupting Amelia, "one thing, however, your sagacity has overlooked, the signature of the marriage articles, will at least entitle Henry to half your fortune, madam."

"No, my Lord," replied Amelia, "it is your lordship's sagacity that was faulty *there;* the marriage articles that were signed yesterday, were made in Sir Everard Mornington's name, the signatures were duly placed, and the deeds sealed and executed in your lordship's presence, and ratified by your lordship's sign manual, securing to him and his heirs for ever, the same proportion of my fortune as would have belonged to the Duke of Albemarle, had the writings been drawn up in his Grace's name."

Lord Somertown stamped his foot in a paroxysm of rage. The Bishop again waved his hand to stop the torrent of passion, which he saw ready to burst from the lips of the angry nobleman.

"I repeat," said the reverend Prelate, "that it was extremely reprehensible, to defer this explanation until now, nor have you yet adduced any thing in your argument to acquit you of the levity I censured; surely madam, this declaration might as well have been made at the signature of the articles as at this moment."

"No, my lord," replied Amelia, "I was then a *minor,* and some effectual step would have been taken, to prevent what I have now accomplished; I am of age to-day, and the first act of my majority, was to bestow my hand where my heart was already; I could not with *prudence* venture on an explanation sooner, nor could I consistent with *truth* defer it any longer; I shall now take my leave of this kind assembly, who having met expressly to celebrate my nuptials, cannot surely

refuse their congratulations on their happy completion, so much to my own satisfaction; my *husband* is waiting for me in a carriage at the door. I particularly requested him not to enter the house, as I feared some altercation might take place in the first heat of resentment, which, on cooler reflection, will, I am sure, be deemed useless and ridiculous, even by Lord Somertown himself."

"Lord Somertown," replied that angry nobleman, "will not be so easily appeased as you may imagine, madam; he will find an opportunity of calling to an account that dastardly incendiary, whose cowardice is now sheltered by the audacity of his *wife*."

"Nay, never *threaten* my good Lord," replied Amelia, smiling contemptuously, "if you meddle with Sir Everard, you will find him no *coward*, the disparity of your ages will insure your own safety, for he would not lift his hand against an old man; but take care how you attempt any *bravo* expedition against him, you may not be so fortunate as your father was; in the *Kensington Gardens' affair, Lord Durham* fell without investigation of the cause of his death, by those who had a right to make it; but suspicion, with her thousand tongues, has whispered dreadful things. Come," continued she, turning to the Duke, and offering her hand to him, with a smile, "you may safely receive this now, so lead me gallantly down stairs;" then turning to the company, she repeated the last lines of Lady Heron's song:

"*She is won, we are gone over,*
"*They have fleet steeds that follow, cried young Lochinvar.*"

The Duke mechanically took the proffered

hand, and led the intrepid Amelia to the carriage that waited for her, whilst the group she had left behind her, stood looking upon each other in speechless astonishment.

"A thousand blessings attend you, lovely Amelia," said the Duke, as he assisted Lady Mornington to ascend the dashing vehicle, "a thousand blessings attend you, and may you be as happy as you have made me."

"Thank you, thank you," replied she, smiling, "I am glad you are in a good humour with me again; for you have looked so *husband-like* for this fortnight past, that you made me hesitate whether I should become a wife or not."

Sir Everard Mornington received his lovely bride with rapture, and bowing to the Duke, the gay barouche, with four beautiful grey horses, dashed off in the true style of *prime* driving, and the Duke returned to the party above stairs.

"You are very *humble* to your jilt of a mistress, Henry," said Lord Somertown to his nephew, "for *my* part, I would sooner have *kicked* than *handed* her down stairs; she carries things with a high hand just now, but I will see whether there is not some redress to be obtained for the insults she has offered me. There is a great deal of connivance in the whole affair," added he, glancing a look of displeasure at the Marquis of Petersfield, "but I had no right to expect any thing else from a *Trentham*." The Marquis was a weak man, and had always felt afraid of Lord Somertown, he therefore attempted an explanation, but Lord Somertown refused to listen to it, and ringing for his carriage, he made a stiff bow to the company, and left the house. As he was quitting the room, he turned to his nephew, and said, in a sarcastic tone, "you may accompany me, if you please, but not unless you feel inclined to do so; perhaps it will be more congenial to your feelings to

elebrate the nuptials of the Amazonian fury, who has just jilted you."

The Duke made no answer to this angry speech except by following his uncle down stairs.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A Father.

One night, when Fanny was retiring to rest, she found a sealed note upon her toilet, superscribed to herself; surprize, and something like fear seized her mind as with trembling hand she broke the seal of this mysterious address; for mysterious it must appear, that a note should be left upon her dressing table in a place where she knew nobody beyond the walls of the house she inhabited.

On opening the paper, she found it was from Mr. Hamilton; it contained the following words:

"I have kept my word, and am now an inhabitant of the house that contains you; this assertion startles you no doubt; but when we meet I will explain the mystery to your satisfaction. I have now no doubts remaining respecting who you are, neither will you, when you hear the wonders I have to relate to you.

"Be not alarmed at my entering your chamber to-morrow night, at twelve o'clock, I shall then conduct you to an old friend, who will convince you that you are indeed my daughter; yes, beloved Fanny, you have found a father in the man who now *uses* the name of *Hamilton!*"

"Merciful heaven!" exclaimed Fanny, lifting

up her hands, and dropping the note which had excited such emotion in her heart. "Can it then be, that I have found a parent? All powerful nature! it was thy voice that spoke within me, when first I beheld the author of my being; it was thy power that called forth my affection with such irresistible force, and bid me love before I knew my father? Alas! how shall I bear the agitation that now harrows up my feelings, for so many hours as must intervene before the time appointed for our meeting?"

Full of emotions such as these, poor Fanny paced up and down her chamber, forgetful of the waning night, and incapable of calming her perturbed imagination. Sometimes she felt such an ecstacy of joy, that she could scarcely flatter herself the picture her fancy drew of the happiness awaiting her, could really be a true one. A doubt would then obtrude itself, that perhaps this was some artifice to ensnare her, and she recollected with dismay, that Mr. Hamilton was a total stranger to her, and that whatever might be the instinctive affection she had felt for him, she had yet no certain proof that he was worthy of the confidence she must repose in him, when she was called upon to commit herself to his guidance at the dead hour of the night, and suffer him to lead her to some sequestered spot, impervious to the knowledge even of those who inhabited the same house.

These were appalling reflections, yet could they not subdue the impulse she felt to obey the summons, and learn her origin from the lips of a *soi-disant* parent.

After several hours spent in the most painful agitation, her wearied frame seemed ready to sink under the combined powers of emotion and fatigue, and unable any longer to bear up against their force, Fanny threw herself, dressed as she

was, upon her bed. A deep slumber soon sealed her senses, and she awoke not until the sun had been some time risen. Her first thought, on starting from her bed, was to look for Mr. Hamilton's note, which she recollected she had dropped from her hand in the first moments of her astonishment at reading its mysterious contents. She wished to re-peruse it, as she remembered the peculiar manner in which the note concluded, where her father said, he now *used* the name of Hamilton; implying that it was not the one that properly belonged to him.

What Colonel Ross had said of his *pretending* to be a gentleman, and his former assertion, that he remembered his being tried for swindling, recurred to her remembrance, and helped to increase her perplexity. As she sought for the note, her eagerness to re-peruse it increased. What then was her consternation and dismay, when, having spent about half an hour in the search, she was obliged to yield to the conviction that the paper was not to be found. At first her terror was excessive, as the loss was as unaccountable as it was unfortunate. That the note had been conveyed out of her room during her sleep, was evident, but by whom, was a point it was impossible to determine, and whoever was in possession of that paper, was master of the secret it contained. When, however, Fanny reflected that the note had been placed upon her table by an invisible hand, she concluded that the same person had resumed it whilst her sleep had enabled them to do so unperceived. It was, however, an unpleasant circumstance to feel at the mercy of a stranger who could enter her chamber at any hour he pleased, and even without her knowledge. She now recalled to mind the circumstance that occurred the first time she spent the holidays at Pemberton Abbey, when she had been awakened

in the night by the appearance of her Mamma Sydney, at her bed-side.

The pains that had been taken to convince her that the apparition was the creature of her own imagination, or the effect of a dream, had never been able to eradicate the impression it had made upon her mind, and she still retained the most perfect remembrance of the circumstance. She recollected too, the mysterious way in which the visitor disappeared, and the pains Lady Ellincourt had been at to ascertain whether or no there was any private entrance to the apartment Fanny slept in; the result of the investigation had been a conviction, that there was no such thing, and that there was no communication from that room but through the door that led to Lady Ellincourt's apartment. The recent occurrence of the note having been placed upon her table, and afterwards removed by the same invisible hand, proved the fallacy of Lady Ellincourt's researches, and she now felt convinced that her infantine ideas, respecting Pemberton Abbey being the place of her earliest residence, were perfectly correct. These reflections strengthened her reliance upon her newly found parent: and she longed for the arrival of the important moment, which was to reveal the secret of her birth, hitherto so darkly enveloped in mystery.

The hour of breakfast now approached, and Fanny repaired to her toilet to arrange her dress, and to remove, as much as possible, the traces of emotion and trouble which had been impressed upon her countenance. She succeeded tolerably well, and descended to the breakfast parlour with a face dressed in smiles.

Lady Maria was already there, and as soon as Fanny entered, she called out with a good humoured laugh, "Great news! important news in the London gazette!"

"What news, dear Lady Maria?" asked Fanny, eagerly.

"Miss Stanhope is married, and the town talks of nothing else!"

Fanny's countenance fell instantly, as Lady Maria finished the sentence. "She is no longer Miss Stanhope then," said she, "but the Duchess of Albemarle."

"Oh no," answered Lady Maria, "you are not at all in the secret; Amelia is married, but not to the Duke, and there is the mighty wonder of the story." Lady Maria then read from the newspaper she held in her hand, the chief of those circumstances that have already been related respecting Amelia's *coup-de-main*, the artifice of substituting deeds drawn in Sir Everard Mornington's name for the marriage articles, instead of those that had been drawn up for the Duke, was particularly dwelt upon by the newspaper wits, who styled Lady Mornington—Napoleon in petticoats.

Fanny felt comparatively indifferent to any of the particulars, but that which spoke of the rupture of the contract between Amelia and the Duke; that news was doubly welcome now, as her imagination had already been expatiating in the field of probability, and fondly fancying that when her birth was ascertained, it might be found such as did not preclude the possibility of the union her heart was most inclined to wish for.

Of Amelia's partiality for Sir Everard Mornington, Fanny had been long convinced, and she rejoiced that her friend's ingenuity had supplied her with the means of so dexterously substituting the man she did like for the one whom she had always expressed the most decided aversion. The means had, indeed, been such as Fanny could not have adverted to; but the contrast in the dispositions of herself and her friend was striking

in almost every other particular, and therefore it was not surprising that they differed in this.

When Col. Ross came in to breakfast, he said, "Are there any letters this morning?"

"Oh dear," replied Lady Maria, "I declare I was so taken up with the newspaper that I forgot the letters; here are several," added she, "and amongst them two for you, Fanny."

When Fanny took the letters into her hand, she recognized the writing of her beloved Lady Ellincourt, on the superscription of the first she looked at. An exclamation of joy burst from her lips at the welcome sight, and she retired to one of the windows to peruse her treasure. What was her rapture then, on reading the following words:

"I know you will rejoice, my beloved Fanny, to hear that we shall soon embrace you. We have taken our passage on board a ship of war, and are waiting for a convoy. We shall therefore in all probability soon follow this letter; the distracted state of this country renders a longer residence here extremely dangerous. You may therefore depend upon soon seeing us."

Fanny could read no farther, but running up to Lady Maria, she put the letter into her hands, and then burst into tears.

"What is the matter, my dear," said Lady Maria, in a tone of alarm.

"Nothing but joy," replied Fanny, smiling through her tears. "My best friends are returning, I shall embrace them once more; I think all happiness comes together."

As Fanny pronounced the last words, Colonel Ross cast a penetrating glance towards her, that confused her.

"Have you any other *great* cause for rejoicing?" said he, "I hope you rest your dependance upon sure grounds."

Fanny made no reply, but opening her other let-

ter, she pretended to be deeply engaged with it. It was from Lady Mornington, and written in her accustomed style of giddiness. After recounting the particulars of her manœuvres, which are already known, she wrote as follows:

"What does my dear Fanny think of my skill, as a general? Should you not suppose that I had studied under the auspices of the little Corsican? indeed, I am inclined to think I surpass him in finesse—and in *stage* effect my drama is unrivalled. I always told you I meant to dramatize Lady Heron's song, and so I have you see; Sir Everard made an excellent young Lochinvar, and he carried me off in the true style of romance, A barouche was substituted for the steed, and that was rather an improvement, as I should not have very well relished the being jumbled upon the crupper of a horse, like fair Ellen of Netherby, although I felt quite as much inclined to play the heroine as she could; and I must tell you who played their part to the life, too, your friend the Duke of Albemarle was quite at home in the character of the '*Poor craven Bridegroom,*' for he literally said '*never a word.*' And although he could not stand 'dangling his bonnet and plume,' because he had not got one, he found an excellent substitute in his watch, which he took out about ten times in a minute, and consulted with as much gravity as if he was feeling the pulses of all the company. I believe if any body could have done that kind office slily, they would have found some symptoms of *fever* in two or three of the *Bridal throng*—poor Lord Somertown in particular; I really thought the old fellow would have beaten me. You never saw such a turkey-cock in your life as he looked, when I made my *daring declaration;* and the good Bishop too, he was preciously angry, and read me such a lecture upon levity as would have done me good at any other time; but you know the preaching pru-

dence to a person who has just married against her friend's consent, is like a physician prescribing for a dead patient. I dare say poor Albemarle had a sound drubbing when his old uncle got the *child* home. By the bye, I think the Duke carries his ideas of subordination a little too far, for he is as much afraid of offending Lord Somertown, as any school-boy is of his pedagogue. I hope when you have him, you will teach him to be a little more independent; but tameness is unfortunately your failing as well as your lover's, and so I am afraid you will make but a spiritless couple. I believe we must take compassion upon you, and give you a few lessons in the science of independence; Sir Everard and I are going to write a book, in concert, and the title is to be 'Nature reversed; or, the spirit of England.' By this treatise we intend to emancipate the minds of our readers from the silly trammels of prejudice and custom: and shew that children ought to command their parents, tutors, guardians, &c.; servants their masters, and wives their husbands; nay, even the brute tribe will find their advantage in this benevolent publication, as it will teach a valuable method of training *rats* (a certain young nobleman, *it is said, has made this valuable discovery, that rats fed upon live* kittens *and* milk, are *a match at* close fighting, *for the stoutest cat that can be found!!!*) to kill *cats*, and thereby deliver that injured part of the creation from the persecution they have hitherto groaned under. Don't you long to read our learned labour? But, my dear, it will take so long composing, revising, and correcting, that you must wait longer than I fear you will like. But, however, you shall not remain uninstructed *all* that tedious period. We intend passing the *honey moon* at this place, namely, Mornington Park, in Lancashire, and in our way from hence to London, we design to *favour* you with a visit *en passant*, and then we shall see what

we can make of you. I make no doubt you will receive a visit from the duke of Albemarle, long before that time; if you should, pray don't forget to tell him, with my compliments, that I never saw him look *so animated*, as when he blessed me and thanked me at parting for *running away from him.* Adieu."

Thus concluded this giddy epistle, and Fanny could not forbear laughing at her lively friend, although her heart did not entirely acquit her of the levity attributed to her conduct by the worthy prelate who had lectured her.

CHAPTER XXVII.

An Affecting Interview.

Fanny's anxiety to have the mystery of her birth elucidated, made the day appear particularly tedious that intervened between her impatience and the hour appointed by Mr. Hamilton for their nocturnal meeting; yet, as the moment approached, she felt dismayed, and almost unequal to the undertaking. A thousand times was she on the point of making Lady Maria her confidant, yet something withheld her from doing so, although the secret trembled on her lips. The idea of meeting a stranger alone, at the dead hour of the night, and confiding herself to his guidance, to be led she knew not whither, had something truly terrific in it; yet such was

her eagerness to penetrate the mystery that involved her, and such her instinctive reliance upon Mr. Hamilton's integrity, that she kept her resolution of meeting him, notwithstanding the well-grounded fears that assailed her. Her stifled emotions, however, made her extremely absent, and Colonel Ross remarked it several times in the course of the day with some asperity. Once, indeed, he observed in a sarcastic tone, that Fanny appeared as full of abstraction as if she were on the eve of some *important event.*

"One would imagine," said he, "that you were going to be *married;* pray is the duke of Albemarle, or Mr. Hamilton, the happy object of your contemplations? Or is it your old friend Lord Ellincourt?"

"I have been thinking of them all in their turn," replied Fanny, with a spirit that surprised herself.

"A confession!" exclaimed the Colonel, "and pray," added he drily, "if I *may* ask who is your *nocturnal* visitor? Is it either of the gentlemen just alluded to?"

Fanny's confusion at this abrupt question was extreme, and she was wholly at a loss for an answer: at length, recovering herself in some degree, she said, "As I don't know what visitor you allude to, I cannot satisfy your curiosity, Sir, as to their identity."

"I perceive," replied the Colonel, "that you understand the art of *evasion;* but that is natural to your sex. However, take my advice, if you will not answer my questions. Beware how you trust yourself to the mercy of a man of whom you know nothing but the specious exterior; and remember that repentance treads close upon the heels of imprudence. So saying, Col. Ross went out of the room, and left Fanny to form what conjecture she pleased, as to the extent of his information.

Sometimes she was ready to imagine that he knew of Mr. Hamilton's mysterious note; but she instantly rejected the idea, because that note had been but a short time in her own possession, and must have been conveyed away by the same means it had been brought thither. Some secret way of entering her chamber was evidently possessed by Mr. Hamilton, and with that it was impossible Col. Ross could be acquainted.

At length the important hour arrived, and Fanny retired to her apartment, and sat with a palpitating heart, expecting her mysterious visitor. The large clock over the stables had struck twelve some time, and yet he did not appear.

As the moment seemed to approach, Fanny's courage expired; and to such a pitch of terror had her perturbed imagination wrought itself, that she was just on the point of flying to Lady Maria's apartment for refuge from the appearance she now dreaded, when a crackling noise behind her made her start and turn round. A large looking glass was fixed in the jam between the window and the chimney, its old fashioned frame curiously wrought, forming the cornice of the compartment, appearing to have been stationary in that spot ever since the building of the house, as many of its rude ornaments corresponded exactly with the antique cornice that bordered the ceiling. The part of the wall where the glass was fixed, appeared perfectly solid, not being covered like the other parts with wainscoting. How great, then, was Fanny's astonishment, when she saw the frame open like a door, and Mr. Hamilton entering from the aperture. He advanced towards her, and took her trembling hand:

"Be not dismayed, my precious child," said he tenderly; "you are in the guardianship of your best friend. I can allow for this terror, however; it is very natural that your gentle nature should be

alarmed at the appearance of a mystery that involves the approaches of your parent. But there is reason for the caution, as you will readily allow, when you have heard my eventful story. Fear not to trust yourself to my guidance. I will lead you to the friend of your infancy, and I doubt not that her testimony will do away every remaining doubt.

Fanny passed through the secret door in silence, and her guide replaced and shut it with a spring; then resuming the hand of the trembling girl, he led her, without speaking, down a long flight of narrow stairs, which terminated in a long passage, so excessively low and narrow, that it was difficult in many parts for Mr. Hamilton to pass; but Fanny's sylph-like form glided through its most acute turnings with ease, whilst her agitated feelings made her movement rapid as the wind.

At length a door opposed their progress; Mr Hamilton rapped three distinct times, and presently it was opened, and they entered a small apartment, through which they passed into one of larger dimensions, where there were two candles upon a table.

Fanny now distinguished the face of the person who had let them in, and to her unspeakable astonishment, beheld the long forgotten features of her "*Mamma Sidney.*"

The old lady pressed the trembling Fanny to her bosom, and sobbed aloud.

"And does my dear child recollect me at last?" said she. "Yes, I perceive you do; those intelligent eyes beam upon me with all your mother's sweetness."

"But you look terrified, my love," added the old lady, in a tone of tender concern. "This agitation is too much for the dear child, Orlando," turning to Mr. Hamilton; "let her rest herself a little, before we ask her any questions."

Fanny now seated herself on a chair, between Mr. Hamilton and her Mamma Sydney, and yielding to the emotions that oppressed her almost to suffocation, she burst into tears. Her two friends suffered her to weep, without interruption, until the violence of her feeelings gradually subsided.

The old lady then began to interrogate Fanny as to her recollection of herself, and those who surrounded her, prior to her being placed at Miss Bridewell's.

Fanny related what she had before said to Lady Ellincourt, the first moment of her visiting Pemberton-Abbey, about her Mamma Sydney, whose image was so forcibly recalled to her remembrance by the apartments she had been wont to inhabit with her. She mentioned, too, her terror at seeing her Mamma Sydney in the middle of the night, whilst sleeping near Lady Ellincourt, in the very same apartment she now inhabited, and described the pains Lady Ellincourt took to ascertain whether there was any secret entrance to the room, concealed in the wainscoting, and the result of that investigation. "I have often tried, since that period," said Fanny, "to persuade myself that my terror had proceeded from a dream, but always found it impossible to divest my mind of the certainty that impressed it, of my having seen you, madam. Lady Ellincourt was so thoroughly convinced, from the examination of the apartment, that nobody *could* enter it, excepting through her room, that she always treated my account of your appearance as the effect of fancy, aided by a dream. How often have the conjectures arising from my reflections upon that puzzling subject, beguiled me of my rest; and I have been at times, almost tempted to believe, that what I had beheld was a supernatural being."

"The mystery is now cleared up," replied the old lady, "as far as relates to the apparition; for

I indeed appeared to you, and pressed your rosy cheek with my lips, before you was conscious of my approach;—that imprudent action awakened you; and the shrieks you uttered imparted the terror I had occasioned you to my own heart."

"But tell me, dear and honoured Madam," interrupted Fanny, with a look of earnest supplication, "O tell me who you are, and give ease to my agitated heart, by informing me who I belong to;" and as she spoke, she turned her expressive eyes, swimming in tears, upon Mr. Hamilton.

He arose, and taking her in his arms; "My Emily! my murdered Emily! exclaimed he, pressing the weeping girl to his bosom; "yes, thou art, indeed, my daughter! every feature in that lovely face recals thy sainted mother."

"I have then no *mother!*" faintly articulated Fanny, then dropping on her knees at the feet of her newly found father, she clasped her hands together, and raising her streaming eyes to his face, she exclaimed, "Receive, then, most honoured of human beings, the homage of an affectionate heart, that has long panted to embrace its parents. I have only one! Oh, let me then bestow on that one, the duty and affection due to both."

Mr Hamilton raised the lovely girl, and embraced her. "What a moment is this!" said he. "Methinks I hold my Emily once more to my bleeding heart! And so I do: for although you, my child, are not named after your unfortunate mother, it is impossible to behold you, and not be struck with your resemblance to her. The name of Fanny was given you in preference to Emily, the better to conceal you from your cruel persecutors. It has had the desired effect; and my child is preserved to bless her doating father; and I shall yet see her assert a right to the rank of her ancestors, and rise superior to the malice of her enemies. But time wears, and I forget that my child is anxious to

know the elucidation of the mystery that now veils her birth; the story is mournful; but she for whose sake your tender heart will weep at the recital, has long ceased to suffer, and we must look for her in the realms of bliss, not in this dreary vale of sorrow and disappointment. Keep this in mind, my love, and let it soften the anguish your filial tenderness must inflict upon you, during the recital of the tale of woe :—

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A Mournful Story.

"My mother was the sole heiress to an immense fortune, with the title and estates of a dukedom entailed upon her eldest son. Her mother was sister to Lord Somertown; and it was always the design of that avaricious and vindictive nobleman to unite his son to my mother. She was accordingly kept very much secluded in the early part of her life, to prevent her forming any attachment before Lord Sheldon returned from his travels. This very precaution, however, was the occasion of her doing so; for in the retirement she lived in with her governess, she became acquainted with my father, who was then just inducted into the living of D——, the village adjacent to Cannington Park, the seat where my mother resided.

"Whether the governess countenanced the attachment, I cannot tell; but be that as it may, the consequence was a clandestine marriage, and when Lord Sheldon came home to claim his bride, she confessed herself already the wife of another.

"It is impossible to describe the rage and fury of Lord Somertown, when informed of his niece's delinquency. He vowed the most unrelenting vengeance, and immediately took every step to punish Mr. Evelyn, her unfortunate husband, and distress Lady Lucy, that was my mother's name. A process was commenced against him in the Court of Chancery, for stealing an heiress; and although, by the testimony of my mother, it was proved beyond a doubt that the act was entirely her own, and his life thereby preserved; yet the expences incurred by the law-suit ill agreeing with his narrow circumstances, he was thrown into prison, where he languished the remaining years of my mother's minority. Nor was her confinement less rigid then her husband's, as she was kept a close prisoner by her inexorable guardian, and every motion strictly watched, lest she should convey any assistance to my father.

"My birth, which happened a few months after the discovery of the fatal secret, increased my mother's distress; and the terror lest I should fall into the merciless hands of her uncle, nearly proved fatal to her during her lying-in. I escaped the jaws of the lion, and was conveyed by a faithful servant of my mother's to a safe asylum.

"My father had a sister who was married to a Mr. Hamilton, but who, together with her husband, was abroad at this trying moment. To her my father had written an account of every thing relating to his unhappy marriage, excepting his pecuniary embarrassments; a gaol being preferable in his eyes to the idea of dependance. His pathetic description of Lady Lucy's situation, and his account

of Lord Somertown's cruelty, alarmed his sister, and she wrote immediately to a friend she could rely upon, and desired her to find means to inform my mother that there was a friend, she might safely trust, ready to receive her child, should she wish to place it out of the reach of her cruel uncle.

"My mother most thankfully embraced the offer; and I was accordingly torn from my weepping parent's bosom, and conveyed to the asylum that had been prepared for me.

"Lord Somertown was outrageous when he found his victim had escaped him; and he spared no pains nor expence to find out my retreat. In this, however, he was disappointed, for my watchful friend had me conveyed to my aunt, at Jamaica, as soon as my tender age admitted of my undertaking such a journey. There I remained until my mother came of age, at which period she effected her escape from the confinement in which she had been kept upwards of four years.

"The first use she made of her liberty, was to restore that of my father; and they were re-married at St. George's, Hanover-square, in the most public manner possible. The immense fortune to which they now acceded promised them every enjoyment this life can afford; but all their pleasure seemed imperfect, whilst separated from their beloved child.

"My aunt, at this time, returned to England, and came to reside at this very house.

"In this place I was first conscious of the embraces of my parents, and had I no other reason, that single recollection would endear Pemberton Abbey to my heart. I was soon, however, removed to the splendid seat of my ancestors, and became the prime object of solicitude to all those that surrounded me, and I must here candidly confess, that had the sunshine of prosperity continued unclouded, the very essence of my being would have been lost in slothful inanity of mind, and the best feel-

ings of my heart stifled by a selfish regard to my own convenience. But I was intended for a life of trial, and my sufferings commenced at an early period. My mother, who had always been extremely delicate, died when I was no more than twelve years old, and my father was immediately involved in a Chancery suit, by a claimant to the estate and title to which I was lawful heir. Lord Somertown's malice to my mother, which survived her, induced him to support the claim of this pretender, and as his lordship had taken care to destroy the evidences of Lady Lucy Darnley's first marriage with Mr. Evelyn, which had been celebrated with all its proper forms, and the banns regularly published, by suborning the clerk to tear the leaf containing the register out of the church books, the marriage could not be proved, and I was bastardized by my own mother's uncle, and our cause fell to the ground.

"My father's grief and distress may be imagined. It took such an effect upon his health that he survived my mother only two years. Destitute as I now was of fortune and rank, I yet never wanted a friend; my uncle, Mr. Hamilton, received me into his house, and treated me like his son, and from that time I assumed his name. A secret hope always pervaded my mind that Lord Somertown's heart would be touched with remorse for his injustice to me, and that he would restore me to my just rights, by permitting the man to return who had been sent abroad by his means, and whose testimony as a witness to the marriage would have been sufficient to reinstate me in the privileges he had deprived me of.

"In this expectation, however, I was deceived; his malice still pursued me, and although he did not know that I had assumed the name of Hamilton, nor been able to ascertain what asylum sheltered me, his endeavours to penetrate the mystery never relaxed, until a report of my death being in-

dustriously spread by my friends, his lordship rejoicing in the extinction of his enemy, deemed himself happy in the consummation of his wishes; the present Duke of Albemarle's father was then the possessor of my just rights, and Lord Somertown, who stood in the same relationship to him as to my mother, was afterwards appointed guardian to his son, the present duke, by his will made on his death-bed. Of my relationship or connection with Mr. Hamilton, Lord Somertown heard nothing, as he had always been too proud to investigate my father's family; and the report of my death precluded suspicion. I grew up, therefore, in the neigbourhood of his family seat, without his ever entertaining an idea of my existence. When I was about nineteen, I came home for the summer vacation from Oxford, and Mr. Hamilton received me with more than usual satisfaction in his countenance.

"I am far from despairing," said he, of "seeing you restored to your just rights, if your inclinations should lead you to second my wishes; but remember, before I communicate what those wishes are, I disclaim all intention of putting the least force upon your affections."

"I was at a loss to guess what this prelude was to lead to; but my good uncle soon put the matter past a doubt, by telling me that Lord Somertown had a grand-daughter that resided with him, who was the most beautiful creature he ever beheld, but whose birth was attended with such circumstances of misfortune, that it is but too probable his lordship may find it difficult to marry her to his satisfaction. 'You, added my uncle, 'are supposed to be my son; your fortune in that case must be immense. Lord S. does not suspect who you really are, and as no reasonable objection can be made, either to your family or fortune, in your present character, I intend to propose the alliance,

provided you should be as much enchanted with the lovely Emily as I am; if you are accepted, it will be an agreeable surprise to lord S— to find, when you have married his grand-daughter, that you are the lawful heir of such rank and fortune as that which certainly belongs to you, nor do I entertain a doubt that he will immediately produce such proofs as will re-instate you in your rights.'

"This scheme appeared so romantic, and my dislike to lord Somertown was so deeply rooted in my heart, that I could scarcely have patience to hear my uncle to the end of his speech; when he paused, I said: You leave me free to do as I like, my dear Sir, said I, and therefore I decline having any thing to do with such a wretch as Lord S—; let him keep his malice, and leave me my resentment. I could not love a grand-daughter of his, I am sure, were she as beautiful as Hebe. Vain boast! of the fallacy of which I was soon after made sensible. The lovely Emily was kept in such seclusion, that it might almost be styled captivity; all the privilege she enjoyed, beyond the state of a prisoner, being the liberty of walking sometimes in her grandfather's park, and even that indulgence was restricted to an early hour in the morning. During these rambles she was attended by the governess who had brought her up, and who doated upon her. It chanced one morning in the shooting season, that I strolled near the precincts of Sheldon Park; my dogs sprung a covey of partridges, who in their flight, made towards a small inclosure adjoining to the park gate, the interior of which was screened from my view by a plantation of young trees. With the eagerness of a young sportsman I discharged my gun, and was preparing to climb the fence in search of my game, when loud shrieks from within filled me with consternation and dismay. I scarcely knew how I got to the spot from whence they proceeded: but when I reached it my

terror was increased, rather than diminished; for I beheld a female figure stretched on the ground, covered with blood, and apparently lifeless, whilst another was bending over her in an agony of terror, not to be described. I too plainly perceived that I was the unfortunate cause of the accident, and I hastened to offer my assistance to the distressed lady. She raised her head to thank me, and discovered a countenance in which was drawn the strongest picture of grief I ever beheld.

"'My beloved child,' exclaimed she, 'is wounded, I fear mortally, let me intreat you, Sir, to assist me in conveying her to the Porter's Lodge, which is not far from hence. I stooped to lift the young lady from the ground; her hat had fallen off, and her face was shaded by her redundant locks; but when, with the assistance of the elderly lady, I raised her from her lowly bed, heavens! what a beauty struck my senses. Pale as she was, with dishevelled locks, and her garments stained with the crimson stream of her blood; yet was she the most lovely object I had ever beheld. My heart died within me, as I bore the lifeless burden to the place her governess had pointed out to me, for I firmly believed she had breathed her last. When we reached the Porter's Lodge, the lovely Emily (for it was herself,) was laid upon a bed, and a man dispatched on horseback to fetch the nearest surgeon, a distance of three miles. I will not pretend to describe the agony I suffered during the time the sweet girl remained in a lifeless state. I stood, the very image of despair, close to the door of the chamber in which she was laid, waiting the sentence of my future happiness or misery. At length I had the unspeakable joy of hearing the delightful exclamation from her attendants, that she revived; and shortly afterwards my rapture was increased by the silver tones of her own sweet voice, inquiring where she was. Her governess

then came to me, and assured me that Miss Hinchcliffe (that was the name my Emily bore,) was much better, and that she could venture to pronounce, without seeing the surgeon, that the wounds she had received were of no material consequence.

"My joy was now as extravagant as my grief had been acute, and I was almost in a delirium, from the excess of the emotion I had suffered. When the surgeon arrived, his testimony confirmed Mrs. Bolton's favourable opinion, for he pronounced the wounds, which were in the fleshy part of the arm, not at all dangerous, and assured us, that the fainting fit, in which the lovely Emily had lain so long, was occasioned by terror more than by loss of blood.

"Time will not permit me to dwell on the events that followed this accident, by which I was introduced to the arbitress of my fate, and became enamoured of the very woman I had declared to my uncle I could never love.

"The distress I had shewn on this occasion, excited an interest for me in the heart of the beauteous Emily; at first, the excuse of inquiring after her health, and entreating her to forgive the injury I had so unwillingly done her, served to apologize for the liberty I took in way-laying her morning rambles; by degrees she appeared to expect my visits, and soon ventured gently to reproach my negligence, if by any accident I was later than usual in making my appearance. Mrs. Bolton, who longed for the emancipation of her pupil from the tyranny she groaned under, gave every encouragement to my addresses, and by this imprudent act, laid the foundation for the future misery of the person she loved best in the world. To be brief, our attachment was mutual, and we exchanged vows of unalterable fidelity to each other: I now entreated my uncle to make the proposal to

Lord Somertown, he had before suggested, explaining to him at the same time, the cause of this sudden change in my opinions. My uncle shrugged up his shoulders and sighed.

"'How perverse is human nature,' said he, 'what is attainable we always despise, whilst those things that are beyond our reach, are generally the objects of our wishes. At the time I proposed the alliance to you, there appeared no impediment to the union; you then was averse to the proposal, and I let the subject drop, little supposing you would happen to wish to renew it at a moment when I am convinced it is impossible; Lord Somertown's inflexibility to all endeavours at thwarting his will, is almost proverbial; whatever he has said shall be, is like the laws of the Medes and Persians, 'which alter not.' An attempt, therefore, to turn him from his designs is really akin to madness. I have just learnt, from undoubted authority, that there is an alliance for his grand-daughter now on the *tapis;* the lover is Lord Ballafyn, of Ballafyn Castle, in Ireland, and as he has never seen the lady, it must be the fortune the grand-father has promised her, that is the object of his affections. I was struck dumb by this intelligence, and almost ready to sink into the ground. As soon as I had recovered myself a little, however, I entreated my uncle not to let a vague report, which might originate in the fertile brain of some gossiping matchmaker, defer him from making the proposal I was now so eager about; adding, with all the sanguine confidence of a youthful lover, that as my fortune exceeded that of Lord B. it was more than probable, if money was Lord Somertown's object, he might be inclined to favour my suit in preference to his Lordship's. My uncle shook his head; but, nevertheless, promised to make the application. He did so, and was rejected in the most positive terms by Lord Somertown, who

assured him that Miss Hinchcliffe was disposed of already; 'she knows nothing of my intentions as yet,' added his Lordship, sternly, 'but it is time enough; when she knows my will, she *must* obey it. I am therefore in no doubt about what *she* may think of the proposal. Her business is to *obey*, not to *question*. When my uncle conveyed this fatal news to me, my agony was beyond expression, and it was a long time before I could give utterance to my feelings; when I did speak, it was only to renew my vows of never marrying any one but Emily. My uncle intreated me to abandon all ideas of so mad an intention, and recalled to my remembrance the sorrows of my unfortunate parents, as well as those of the hapless Emily. This argument had no effect, however, with me; misery appeared in no way so certain as in a separation from her I loved; and could I but obtain the object of my affection, the world appeared a cheap price to pay for such an inestimable treasure. When I had an opportunity of conversing with Emily, and imparting my sentiments to her upon our cruel situation, it was some consolation to me to find her as willing as myself to brave the frowns of the world, and the dangers of poverty, rather than relinquish the sweet hope of being united. The same romantic affection inspired us both, and under its dangerous influence we acted so as to entail irremediable evil on ourselves and our offspring. Lord Somertown had not the least suspicion of our attachment, and imagined that my uncle's proposal, whose son he supposed me to be, had been made for the alliance with a view of aggrandising his family. This unfortunate blindness on Lord Somertown's part was but too favourable to our secret correspondence, and we continued to meet without hindrance or suspicion. At length the dreaded proposal was made, in person, by Lord Ballafyn, and his Lordship introduced to Emily, who was inform-

ed by her grandfather, that she must look upon his lordship as her future husband, without a single question being asked her, whether he was agreeable to her or not.

"The day after this dreadful meeting, my beloved Emily appeared in such distress and terror of mind, that it drove me almost to madness, and in the insanity of the moment, I proposed a clandestine marriage to her. There is not, said I, any danger of our union being set aside, if we can once accomplish it, as I am of age; and it will be easy to get the banns published without Lord Somertown's knowledge, who never goes to church. Emily listened to me with complacency, and I soon prevailed with her to consent to the measure, which was immediately adopted; I gave a very large sum of money to the clergyman and also to the clerk, and by that means obtained the secrecy I wished for; the former had a great impediment in his speech, which defect he managed so dexterously as to render our names totally unintelligible to the congregation. Our being asked in church was unnoticed, a circumstance that was considerably assisted by several other couples being asked at the same time. Not long afterwards, during a short absence of Lord Somertown, from Sheldon Park, we were married, and fondly flattered ourselves that we were now safe from the tyranny we dreaded: alas! we had for ever rivetted the chains that bound us, and given our enemies a power to hurt us they could not otherwise have possessed. About three months after our marriage, Emily received orders to prepare herself to become a bride, and she was directed to make the necessary purchases for her nuptials. It was in vain, that the poor girl implored her inexorable parent to listen to her for a few minutes; he spurned her from him, telling her that no reply was necessary on her part, as she had nothing to do now she knew his will, but to obey it.

'Lord Sheldon,' said he,' is coming from Saxony, whither he had been sent on a diplomatic mission; and when he returns, your marriage will take place immediately. Lord Ballafyn intends being here the latter end of this month, and I desire, as you value your future happiness, to clear up that dismal countenance, and receive him in a manner suitable to my wishes.

"Poor Emily could make no reply to this peremptory command, but quitting the room as fast as her trembling limbs would permit her, she sought the refuge of her own chamber, snd there, on the bosom of her faithful friend, Mrs. Bolton, she poured forth the anguish of her heart; the terror and agitation the sweet girl suffered on this trying occasion, brought on a most alarming illness, and for many days her life was despaired of. Think what must have been my sufferings when I knew that the beloved object of all my hopes, in this world, lay at the point of death, and I did not dare to approach her pillow, to whisper one word of tender consolation in her ear. The kind-hearted Mrs. Bolton did all she could to mitigate my anxiety, and gave me regular information three or four times a day; and every night during my Emily's extreme danger, I watched beneath her window, disguised in the coarse frock and slouched hat of a ploughman; who being frequently employed to watch the poachers, excited no suspicion by being seen lurking about in the dead of the night.

"At length the sweet creature was restored to my prayers, and I received the heart-soothing tidings of her safety and amended health. This joyful event was followed by another, which appeared to promise us the confirmation of our happiness; I mean the death of lord Somertown, which happened suddenly, just before Lord Ballafyn's expected arrival. I will not repeat the gay visions of happiness that floated on my brain when I heard

of an event so propitious to our hopes of liberty, as I never entertained a fear that Lord Sheldon could resemble his father so closely as I have since found, to my sorrow, that he did.

"The death of Lord Somertown put a stop to all ideas of the proposed alliance with Lord B—— for some time, and as the new Lord was still detained abroad by his diplomatic functions, Emily was left for several months to follow the bent of her own inclination. It may easily be supposed that it was the society of her husband she would seek, under such circumstances; and many a half gone hour have we spent together, in these very apartments, whose private communications with Pemberton Abbey had been but lately discovered by a servant of mine, who informed me of it, and shewed me the secret spring that closed the mysterious pannel. As a reward for so valuable a discovery, I settled fifty pounds a year upon the man, and gave nim that small house to live in: and, with the assistance of his wife and the worthy Mrs. Bolton, whom you have hitherto known by the name of your Mamma Sydney, your beloved mother, in this secluded asylum, gave birth to a lovely infant, who was immediately baptised by the name of Fanny. And such were the precautions adverted to, on this occasion, that not the slightest suspicions were awakened among the domestics, at Sheldon Park, who were all, excepting one confidential servant, wholly ignorant of my Emily's absence. As soon as her weakness would permit, she returned to her home, but you was left here with your nurse, the wife of my servant.

"We now awaited Lord Sheldon's return with the utmost impatience, as we had come to the resolution of declaring our marriage to him at the first interview. Alas! had we known the horrors that would be the consequence of his return, we should have fled to some distant climate, whilst

the possibility of flight remained within our power, Such, however, was our infatuation, that we dreamt not of our danger until the dark cloud of irremediable misfortune burst over our devoted heads, and crushed us for ever. But I will not dwell upon this dreadful part of my narrative.

"As soon as Lord Somertown arrived in London, he wrote to his niece, to inform her, that the nuptials which he was sorry had been so long delayed on *his* account, should be solemnised immediately: and that it was his intention to be at Sheldon Park in ten days, from the date of his letter.

When Emily communicated this unwelcome news to me, my mind suggested the propriety of immediately informing Lord Somertown of our marriage, and intreating his sanction to it, as I judged it would only exasperate him the more, to suffer him to come down in the country under such erroneous ideas.

"I accordingly wrote to him upon the subject, with an eloquence that would have moved any heart but his own; his answer was couched in terms the most friendly, and contained only a very slight stricture upon secret marriages, which he said, were but too often the cause of much unhappiness in families, adding, that he hoped our's would not prove of that description. His Lordship requested my immediate presence in London, as he said, it was necessary we should have some conversation together, previous to his visiting the country, and he concluded his letter with every assurance of the most cordial friendship.

"This was so much above my hopes, that I was in ecstacies, and my Emily was several times obliged to check my transports. Indeed, her apparent apathy soon moderated my joy, for I saw she did not seem to exhilirate as I did; and if any thing *could* have made me angry with that

M^r Hamilton taking leave of Emily on her departure.

[illegible] Sept^r 1^st

[illegible] Pubd by Tho^s Kelly 17 Paternoster Row June 1^st

angel, I should have been so on that occasion; for I was disappointed at her coldness.

"Alas! her's was a presentiment of evil, which the subsequent events too soon justified."

"To be brief, I tore myself away from the dearer part of my soul, and commenced my ill-fated journey, full of the most pleasing expectations, little imagining I had seen my Emily for the last time. When I arrived in London, I waited upon Lord Somertown immediately, and was received with the utmost cordiality. As soon as the first compliments were over, I began speaking upon the subject of the settlements, and as my uncle had authorised me to do, I made the most liberal offers. Lord Somertown seemed rather to evade than press the subject, and he once said, with rather a mysterious air, 'there are some circumstances with which I am acquainted, that perhaps you do not suspect are known to me; on some future day we will talk upon those matters, as I should wish the *real* rank of the man my niece marries should be known to the world. I caught at this insinuation, and assured his lordship, that from that moment I could have no secrets with a friend so nearly allied to me. 'Not *now*,' said he nodding significantly, 'but the time is not far distant when the confidence will be mutual.'

"There was something in Lord Somertown's manner of pronouncing these words that did not please me; yet, as I could not make any objection to what he said I was obliged to be silent.

"I wrote an account of this interview to my adored Emily, and also to my uncle. A few days after this I received a note from Lord Somertown, requesting me to dine with him at his villa on the banks of the Thames, near Richmond, as he had some business to transact with me of the utmost importance. I obeyed the fatal summons with alacrity, and reached the appointed place just as dinner was ready.

"Lord Somertown welcomed me by a cordial shake of the hand, assuring me that I had made him happy by this ready compliance with his request; 'and I trust,' added he with a smile, 'that you will confess before we part that I am not your debtor. Every thing is arranged for your future welfare in a manner that cannot fail of success.' I understood by this speech, that Lord Somertown alluded to my claims on the title and estates of Albemarle, and I expressed my warm sense of his kind attention to my interest.

"'Say not a word about it,' answered he, 'you cannot judge *how much* you are obliged to me, until you know what I have done for you—The dinner waits, let us defer business till that is over. I followed the *fiend* into the dining parlour, we dined tête-a-tête, but as the servants waited, not a word passed during dinner. After the cloth was removed I adverted to the subject of our former correspondence, but Lord Somertown pressed me to take some wine with such eagerness, that I could not refuse: glass after glass was forced upon me, which I swallowed much against my inclination, merely to get rid of his importunity.

"I did not at first perceive that Lord Somertown was not drinking himself, for my mind was so occupied with the ideas that crowded upon it, that I had scarcely any perception of what was passing before me. When, however, I *did* observe it, I declined drinking any more.

"Your Lordship," said I, laughing, "nas a design upon me, for you are making me drink whilst you are abstaining from wine yourself." 'There may be reasons,' answered he, 'that may render it more necessary for you to take wine, than would stand good for me; however, I believe you have taken enough,' added he, empahatically, 'and therefore you may do as you like about having any more.'

"There was something very mysterious in Lord Somertown's manner, but as I had no suspicion of his malice to me, it excited my curiosity without alarming me.

"After conversing for some time longer upon indifferent subjects, and studiously avoiding the one I wished to lead to, Lord Somertown, after looking earnestly at his watch for some minutes, suddenly started up—'It is time,' said he to drop the mask of dissimulation; the drug I have administered must have taken effect, and I should lose half my vengeance if my victim remained in ignorance of the hand that inflicted the blow.

"As Lord Somertown spoke, I involuntarily rose from my chair, and a vague presentiment of the truth came over my mind, at least of Lord Somertown's malice to me; for I thought he had administered poison in my wine. I was mistaken —death was too merciful a doom to be awarded by the monster, to the man he hated; the drug was intended to render me inanimate, and by suspending my powers, to make me the easy victim of his deep laid scheme. Too certain in its effects, I already felt the all-subduing influence creeping over my frame; and whilst horror and resentment struggled at my breast, my unnerved limbs trembled beneath my weight, and almost refused to sustain me, whilst I listened to the sentence pronounced by my arch enemy.

"'Know,' said he, in a voice trembling with rage and guilt, 'know' unhappy wretch, that I am acquainted with your origin; yes, I am informed that you are the offspring of that proud beauty who scorned my proffered love, and of my detested rival, whose insidious arts made her forget her duty, and rendered her blind to the superior merit that sued for her affection. My father hated your parents, and I inherit his hatred with his title; your mother eluded my vengeance by death

—your father also escaped me, but their offspring is mine, and I shall have glorious revenge; I see your senses are becoming torpid, through the influence of the drug you have swallowed, I will therefore hasten to inform you that you are doomed to live, but to exist in such a state of wretchedness that death would be a mercy. Remember, your misery flows from *me:* Oh! forget not that circumstance, or I have but half my vengeance; your wife, too, my degenerate niece, who had dared to unite her fate to that of the enemy of her family, shall have an equal portion of suffering—let that reflection gall you, and add to the anguish of perpetual slavery; the manner of her punishment I will not tell you, for suspense and doubt aggravate affliction of every kind; know this only, she shall *wed another.*

The drug had begun its operation indeed, and a torpor not to be resisted was creeping over my whole frame, yet when Lord Somertown pronounced the last fatal words—'she shall wed another,' my expiring senses were awakened, and the fury that transported my soul inspired one last effort of strength: I flew and seized the collar of my insulting foe, but whilst I held him struggling in my grasp, he contrived to stamp with his foot, and several of his creatures came to his assistance. I was easily secured, for the short-lived energy had already subsided, and my stiffening limbs, and stupified senses overpowered me more than the united strength of the bravoes.

"From this moment I remembered nothing more, until I found myself confined in a narrow inconvenient recess, which appeared intended for a bed; but the cruel way in which my hands and feet were manacled, prevented me from stretching myself upon it, so as to obtain any rest. Impenetrable darkness enveloped me, but the constant splashing of water close to my head, convinced

me that I was upon the sea, in some vessel, destined by my persecutor to convey me far from that happy land, where unjust imprisonment is forbidden by the laws.

"At first I was at a loss to account for my wretched situation, but by degrees my recollection returned, and the dreadful truth flashed on my awakening senses. It is surprising to me at this moment that phrenzy did not seal my wretchedness, for I remembered the dreadful words, 'she shall wed another;' and in the agony they excited, I attempted to tear off the manacles that confined me; the effort I made was attended with so much noise, that it brought one of the ship's crew to my little cabin.

"'What's in the wind now?' exclaimed he in a rough tone, 'you had better be quiet, my hearty; you will be worse off if you don't mind what you are about: and considering the crimes you have been guilty of it is no great matter.'

"'Crimes' reiterated I, 'what crimes can possibly be laid to my charge, who never injured any one?'

"'You did not do what you wished to do,' rereplied the tar, 'but that was no thanks to you.'

"'Tell me, I entreat you,' said I, 'of what am I accused?'

"'Oh, you have forgot it, have you?' answered he, 'that's comical too, by jingo. Well then, I'll rub up your memory a bit. Don't you remember when you attempted to kill your uncle, Lord Somertown?'

"'I attempt to kill Lord Somertown,' interrupted I, 'Heavens, what a falsehood; I never even dreamt of such a thing!'

"'Why, as for that, you know best,' replied the tar, 'but it argufies very little now to deny it. I should think it rather unlikely such a thing should be invented of an innocent man; but the short

and the long of it is, that your uncle says you did so, and out of compassion to you, and to save the disgrace of having you hanged, he had you conveyed on board our vessel, whilst you were dead drunk ; for when you found your wicked intention was frustrated, you took a quantity of laudanum, in hopes to escape your deserts, but it was not enough to kill you, and as the affair was blowed, you must have been prosecuted, if your good uncle had not sent you beyond seas. We shall land you as soon as we find a convenient place, for we don't want the company of murderers in the Blithe Betsey, I can assure you ; but we will take care it shall be where you are not likely to get away from again.'

" The agony of my mind at this intelligence may easily be imagined. At first I gave way to despair, and vented my anguish in exclamations of sorrow ; but recollecting how fruitless was such weakness, I determined to subdue it. Whilst life was spared me, escape was not impossible, and when I thought upon the cruel situation of my beloved Emily, it awakened such an ardent desire to rescue her, that it gave a supernatural strength to my mind, and supported me through the severest of trials.

" As soon as my informer could be prevailed upon to listen to me, I told my plain unvarnished tale, and laid open, to the honest seaman, a train of iniquity that shocked his simple nature. He who had been taught to hate me as a murderer, now pitied me as an oppressed victim of the blackest treachery.

" He determined upon my deliverance, with all the ardour of increased benevolence, and unloosing the manacles that confined me, as a pledge of his future services, he bade me be of good cheer, for that he was certain his captain, who, though rough as the element he plowed, was generous

and humane, would scorn to be the implement of oppression in the hands of a tyrant like Lord Somertown. He had been prevailed upon to take charge of me for a large reward, under the supposition that he was doing an act of mercy to a culprit, who merited death, by giving him a chance of living to repent his crimes, at the same time he was saving a noble family from the stigma of being allied to a felon.

"As soon therefore, as my new friend Jack Thomson had repeated my melancholy story to him, and removed the prejudice that had hitherto kept him from speaking to me, I was ordered into his cabin, and received from Captain Armstrong the credit my narrative deserved. From that moment I was free, and treated with the same kindness as his chief mate, who was also his nephew. The generous Armstrong was, however, bound to the coast of Africa, and as I was eager, beyond expression, to return to England, that I might ascertain the fate of her who was dearer to me than my life, he kindly promised to put me on board the first vessel we should meet with, bound to my native shore. 'And when you get there, my friend,' said he, 'keep close under hatches, or hoist false colours to deceive the enemy, until Roger Armstrong returns to his moorings, then never fear but we will work him pretty tightly. Your testimony will argufy nothing without a witness; you had better therefore be mum, until you can *jaw* him to some purpose.

CHAPTER XXIX.

An Affecting Story continued.

"Two days had only elapsed, after this promise, before a vessel spoke to us, consigned to London. The terms of my passage homeward were soon agreed upon, and paid for by the generous Armstrong, who also supplied me with a small sum for my present emergency, and took leave of me with the kindness of a brother, recommending the greatest caution in concealing myself from Lord Somertown, whose determination to destroy me could not be doubted, and who would now have double reason to wish my extermination. I thanked him, and promised to attend to his advice; I therefore purchased a complete sailor's habit, and thus disguised might have passed my nearest friend without suspicion.

"These precautions were, however, of little avail, for as we were sailing with a fair wind, and within a few leagues of our native land, we were attacked and captured by a French Vessel, of such superior force as made all resistance on our side vain.

"My story, in this, presents but little variety. A prisoner, unaided by money, undistinguished by apparent rank, I suffered the severest hardships; nor could I procure my exchange, although I wrote several letters to my uncle, Mr. Hamilton, describing my situation, and entreating his assistance: to

these letters I received no answer, and four tedious years rolled away in hopeless captivity. At length two of my fellow prisoners, whose fortunes appeared as desperate as mine, proposed to me to attempt an escape. We did so, and succeeded, and after encountering perils that would have disheartened minds less determined upon emancipation, we landed upon a lonely part of the coast of Sussex, having been several days buffeting the waves in an open boat, without provision, without a compass, and in momentary danger of perishing from hunger and fatigue, if we even escaped the stormy ocean.

"The joys so naturally the consequence of such an escape, was considerably diminished in my breast, by the dread that seized me, as I reflected upon the forlorn state in which I left my beloved Emily, when I was torn from my native land by her barbarous uncle. My heart died within me as I thought upon what she might have suffered, and tears and sighs succeeded to the effusions of joy that broke forth at my first landing.

"My fellow sufferers and I were relieved from the pressure of our hunger and nakedness, by a benevolent gentleman, whose hospitable mansion received us for one night. This amiable man, whose vicinity to the sea-side exposed him to frequent applications from shipwrecked mariners, was the greatest philanthropist on earth; he dedicated the chief of his fortune to the relief of his fellow creatures; and always kept warm coarse cloathing in his house, to bestow upon the half-perished creatures that were so often thrown upon his mercy by the storm and tempest. Clad in a complete suit of this comfortable apparel, and supplied with a small sum for my present necessities, I took leave the next morning of my benevolent host, and pursued my journey towards the metropolis, so much disguised in my appearance, that, had not hardship and long suffering already altered my countenance.

it would have been impossible for any one to recognize me.

"When I arrived in London I made several enquiries concerning the family of Lord Somertown, but could learn nothing more, than that he was in good health, for little was known at those places where I could venture to enquire, concerning the interior management of his family. I did not therefore make any stay in town, but hastened to reach my native home, not doubting that I should find all the relief I stood in need of as soon as I reached my reputed father's house. Alas! how miserably was I disappointed, when I arrived there, weary, and almost sinking with fatigue and sorrow, to find it shut up, and to hear the heart-breaking intelligence from the only domestic that inhabited the forlorn pile, that grief for the loss of his only son had affected Mr. Hamilton's health and spirits so severely, that he had quitted England, and was gone to reside abroad entirely.

"I had nearly sunk on the ground when I heard the cruel tidings, but fearful of making a discovery of myself, at a moment when concealment was become more important than ever, I commanded my emotions therefore, and enquired whether this little mansion was still inhabited by the same person that occupied it five years before; the servant answered in the affirmative, and I bent my footsteps hither. Without discovering myself, I enquired of my faithful servants if they knew what was become of Mrs. Bolton, at first they hesitated, but Franklyn happening to look earnestly in my face, uttered a scream and exclaimed, 'Good Heavens! can it indeed be my beloved master;' disguise was now useless, and I acknowledged myself to him, intreating him to be prudent, and not let my arrival be suspected; he promised to obey my commands, and after having forced me to take some refreshment, he satisfied my curiosity without easing my heart.

"I then found that Mrs. Bolton was the secret inhabitant of Pemberton Abbey, where she acted the part of a mother to my beloved child. 'Oh shew me to her,' said I, 'she can tell me something of my adored Emily, whose beauteous image I am dying to embrace.'

"'Alas! Alas!' said the faithful Franklyn, 'the news Mrs. Bolton can give you of Lady Emily will not give you pleasure, would to God you were never to hear it.' This speech only rendered me more impatient to hear my doom:—'What is there,' exclaimed I, 'that can surpass what my own terrified imagination now suggests. To be brief, I was introduced through the subterraneous passage into the Abbey, and left in one of its desolate apartments,whilst Franklyn went to prepare Mrs. Bolton for my reception.

"The good woman came to me with streaming eyes, and spreading out her arms, embraced me with the affection of a parent. For some minutes her sobs choaked her utterance, but as soon as she could speak, she exclaimed, 'Oh! my friend, you have come too late to save our Emily!' 'She is dead then!' said I, sinking into the seat that stood nearest me. 'Oh no, she is not dead, death would have been a mercy compared to the anguish, she has suffered.' 'Tell me, oh tell me the worst, said I, 'my mind is prepared for horror.'

"'Your Emily is *married* then,' answered she, whilst a torrent of tears burst from her eyes. 'She is married, or rather tied, to a tyrant whose cruelty no sweetness can soften, no gentleness subdue.'

"My agony was now without bounds, and for several minutes I was in a paroxysm of rage and distraction: At first view of my unfortunate situation, I was inclined to throw some blame on Emily. 'Ah where,' exclaimed I, 'was that faith so often pledged to me, that love which she so solemnly

had vowed should never change? Surely had they existed with their wonted firmness, no threats, no persuasions, could have induced her to renounce me! she would have preferred death to such an infidelity!

"'Blame not that faultless creature,' replied Mrs. Bolton, 'for she is a martyr to the most exalted virtue, and her affection for you, her undying tenderness for your memory, could not be more strongly proved than by the action that made her the wife of Lord Ballafyn. She had been imposed upon by an account of your death, and when sunk in the affliction that belief entailed upon her, the preservation of the dear pledge of your love alone could rouse her to any regard for what was passing in a world she no longer wished to remain in; but for the sake of that sweet innocent: what then must have been her agony, when she was informed by her cruel uncle, that he held her darling in his power, and that a compliance with his proposals, and implicit obedience to his commands, could alone insure its safety. The wretched mother listened with horror to the dreadful alternative—the dissolution of soul and body could not have inflicted a severer pang than that which wrung her heart, when obliged to choose between the sentence of death for her infant, or misery for herself. Maternal tenderness triumphed, and the lovely victim was led to the altar in mute agony to seal her wretched doom, and complete the triumph of diabolical revenge.

"Before the inauspicious nuptials, however, she insisted upon the possession of her child, which was accordingly delivered to her, and by her confided to my care, with the most solemn injunction to conceal it in some place of security from the knowledge of Lord Somertown, whose vengeance she still dreaded, and on whose promises she could place no reliance: My knowledge of the secret

inlet to Pemberton Abbey, made me choose that for my asylum, and Mr. Hamilton's consent being obtained, I retired hither, unsuspected and unknown; nor has it ever been supposed, since Mr. Hamilton's absence, that any one inhabited that mansion, excepting the servant left to take care of it, whose superstitious fear of the wing I inhabit, which is reported to be haunted by a man dressed in complete armour, effectually secures me from any interruption from her.

"'Where then is my Emily,' cried I in a tone of agony, 'oh tell me where she is, that I may fly and snatch her from the tyranny she groans under, I will assert my right to her, although legions of infernal beings guarded the access to her prison!'

"'Immediately after her nuptials,' replied Mrs. Bolton, 'the angelic sufferer was dragged to Ireland by the unfeeling man who had married her—there she has been immured ever since in an old castle belonging to her tyrant, without even the consolation of a single friend's conversation to relieve the tedium of captivity; and during the space of three long years, I have received but two letters from her; the last contains only a few lines, and arrived a few days ago; it came through the medium of Franklyn.' Mrs. Bolton took the letter from her pocket-book, and I eagerly snatching it, read these words:—

My kind Friend,

"'Accept the best thanks a broken heart can offer for the care you take of my treasure; I am obliged to withdraw it from you, for reasons that I dare not name; fear not to trust it to the care of the person I shall send for it, who will tell you a secret known only to us three, and thereby prove her identity.'

CHAPTER XXX.

The Affecting Story concluded.

And is my precious child gone then?" said I, "shall I not even embrace her?"

"She is still with me," answered Mrs. Bolton, "and I am happy you came before her removal, it will be a great satisfaction to me."—So saying, the worthy woman led me to the apartment that contained my blooming treasure.

"I will not dwell upon that scene, the emotions excited by rapture, mingled with extreme anguish, were too much for my agitated frame, and delirium was the consequence; for several days, Mrs. Bolton attended me, with scarcely a hope of my recovery; at length, however, my youth triumphed over disease, and I was restored to health of body, but not to sanity of mind; and the wild project of visiting Ireland, to emancipate my injured Emily, became the darling object of my every wish, and the fixed determination of my soul.

There was so much method in the madness that affected me, that Mrs. Bolton was not aware of the danger of my situation, and she suffered me to depart on my wild expedition, without opposition. How I found my way to Ballafyn Castle, I cannot now tell, but certain it is I reached it, notwithstanding the thousand difficulties that seemed to oppose so perilous an undertaking.

"The result of the attempt, however, was an increase of wretchedness. Lord Ballafyn had been apprised, I believe of my existence, by some strange chance; and, I was suspected, as soon as observed to loiter near the Castle; by a stratagem, I was induced to enter its walls, and, by its base owner, betrayed into the hands of ruffians, who conveyed me on board a ship that was lying at a neighbouring port, waiting to receive recruits for the West India service. In this receptacle of misery, I was stowed down in the hold with a set of unfortunate *beings*, who had been inveigled, or rather kidnapped, by the wretches employed to procure them for a service no man would enter voluntarily.

"I will pass over all the sufferings of the voyage. Alas! I was not sensible to all their poignancy, for mental imbecility threw its friendly cloud over half my sorrows, and for many weeks, I was almost unconscious of my existence.

"In our way to the island we were bound to, our vessel touched at Jamaica, and there the yellow fever breaking out amongst our ship's crew, we were landed for the recovery of our health; I entered the hospital amongst the rest, and stretched upon my wretched pallet, was expected hourly to expire.

"An English gentleman, of large fortune, who resided on the island, had long made it his custom, in imitation of the benevolent Howard, to dedicate not only his fortune but his time, to the divine task of mitigating the sufferings of his fellow-creatures. He visited the prisons, the hospitals, in short, every species of wretchedness, and no fear of infection, no considerations of personal safety, could for an instant impede his beneficent exertions.

"This philanthropist, this friend of the human race, visited *my* forlorn pallet, little imagining the reward prepared for his benevolence. Yes, my sweet girl, his angelic goodness *was* rewarded, for

in the person of the forsaken sufferer, he had visited from motives of pure humanity, he found a long lamented and still tenderly-beloved nephew.

It was my worthy uncle, Mr. Hamilton, whose godlike charity led him to my succour, when the lamp of life was just expiring, and my sufferings and my wrongs were just sinking into the vale of oblivion!!

"The tenderest care, the most unremitting solicitude, joined to a skill in the treatment of the disorder, rendered superior to all others from the wisdom of experience, soon conquered my bodily indisposition; but, alas! the distemper of my mind lay deeper rooted, and long, very long, did it baffle every tender effort made by my more than kind father, for my restoration.

"At length, when he had nearly relinquished all hopes of my recovery, my reason was restored to me, and I had the inexpressible delight of once more embracing my truly paternal friend.

"Heavens, what a scene followed! It is impossible to paint the indignation felt by Mr. Hamilton, whilst he listened to the recital of my wrongs. Not all the humanity that filled his worthy heart, could prevent him from wishing to bring to condign punishment the abandoned author of my woes.

"He made immediate preparations for returning to England, determined to lose no time, and spare no expence, in order to expose the villainy of so daring an outrage upon the safety of civilized society. But, alas! a premature death put an end to all these projects.

"My dear uncle was seized with a fever, caught by his too close attendance upon one of the unfortunate objects of his bounty, and a few days terminated his valuable existence.

"Before he expired, however, he secured all his possessions to me, and left me as rich and as

wretched as he had been himself, before the exercise of philanthrophy had raised him above the world he inhabited, and fitted him for a better.

" A relapse into my former malady was the consequence of the grief I felt at my uncle's death.

" That kind friend had foreseen the probability of such a misfortune, and provided accordingly for my safety, and the security of my fortune in case of such an event, by appointing two gentlemen my trustees whose integrity he could rely upon. They fulfilled his expectation; and by their humane attention I was preserved during three melancholy years, from the miserable consequences of occasional insanity, and at length restored to the full possession of my senses, and all the enjoyment of my fortune I could now hope to experience.

" My most earnest wish was now to return to England, for my lacerated heart panted to enquire after my Emily and her offspring. Mr. Barlowe, one of my trustees, opposed me, however, and entreated me to wait until the enquiries, he had set on foot relative to the objects of my anxiety, should be replied to. Alas! the result of those inquiries gave the death blow to my hopes. My Emily, I found, was no more; her beatified spirit was now become an inmate of the Heaven, for which her sorrows had so perfectly prepared her; and my lovely infant, Mrs. Bolton wrote me word, had been conveyed to France, by the lady to whom my Emily had confided her, and that notwithstanding all the enquiries she had since made after the sweet innocent, she had never been able to obtain the slightest information, although she had strictly followed the directions given her by the lady who took her lovely charge from her, and who styled herself Lady Betty Molineux. 'As no reason was ever assigned for taking the dear child from my care,' said Mrs. Bolton in her letter, 'I think the action never could be the free will of my

sweet Emily; she would not have wounded a heart, so long, so truly devoted to her service, without explaining the motives of such a proceeding; I have looked at both her letters on the subject of the child's removal, and compared them with others in my possession, and every time I examine them, I feel more and more convinced they are forgeries.

" 'From this belief I am inclined to fear the dear child has fallen into the hands of the inexorable enemy of her family. But you can travel, my good friend; seek her, therefore, in France, you connot fail of knowing your child by her likeness to her mother.

" 'You are supposed dead by every one. Your inquiries cannot alarm the most vigilant suspicions. Go and prosper.

"I followed my friend's advice, but without success. I resided several years in France; travelling from place to place, still cherishing the hopes of finding my darling, but still meeting disappointment.

" About a year ago I returned to Jamaica on some business of importance, and there met my kind friend Mr. Barlowe.

" In speaking to him, one day, on the subject next my heart, I dwelt upon the fruitless search I had been making afer my lost daughter. He then related to me a story of a friendless girl, who had been placed, in a mysterious manner, at the school where his daughter had been educated; and the decription he gave of your person, age, and the time of your being placed at school, corresponded so exactly with my own narrative, that I felt assured I had found the long lost jewel.

" I hastened to England, and found my hopes confirmed, by Mrs. Bolton, who related the circumstance of her nocturnal visit to your chamber! soon after you became the *protege* of your near relation, Lady Ellincourt.

"She told me she had written to me on the subject during my stay in France: by some chance, however, the letter had never reached me, and thus my sorrows had been protracted. I had the mortification to find that Lady Ellincourt and her son had left England, and Mrs. Bolton at first imagined you had accompanied them. This opinion proved erroneous, for I soon afterwards found you in London.

"You must remember our first meeting."

"I do, indeed," replied Fanny, "and the strange unaccountable emotions of my heart, when first the sound of your voice struck upon my ear. My dear, dear father," continued the lovely girl, dropping on her knees before her parent, "receive your daughter's fond assurance that every moment of her future life shall be devoted to you. Oh may heaven in its infinite mercy, grant that my tender assiduities may succeed in soothing your deep-felt sorrows, and awaken a gleam of joy, to gild the evening of your day!"

"Sweet recompence for all my sufferings," said Mr. Hamilton, "a treasure richer than expression can impart! Ah! where is sorrow if thou art mine? or shall I murmur at aught that is withheld whilst thou art restored to me? I have but little more to relate of my story.

"As soon as I had convinced myself that you were indeed my daughter, I wrote to Lady Ellincourt upon the subject, and received the kindest answer possible. Her ladyship entreated me, however, to keep the matter secret, until her return, and to act with caution respecting lord Somertown, who, though advanced in age, has not grown in goodness. I have followed her ladyship's advice, without ever losing sight of my darling, whose footsteps have been closely watched by an anxious father, ever since he was so happy to find her.

"Lord Somertown does not suspect my existence; for my face is so much altered it is impossible he should recollect me, particularly as he supposes me dead so many years ago, for the report of my having died of the yellow fever had been carried to Lord Ballafyn, by the Captain to whose care he consigned me.

"I had, one evening, the pleasure of terrifying my cruel enemy, by speaking in my own voice, close at his ear some words that struck with deep remorse his guilty soul, and made him shrink, appalled at the dreadful warning, whilst terror palsied his tottering frame, he fell on the ground, incapable of ascertaining from whence the voice came.

"I had, therefore, plenty of time to escape; and to this moment he supposes the words were uttered by some supernatural being.

"When, therefore, I found my precious child under the protection of so near a connection of her bitterest enemy, I determined to act with the most scrupulous circumspection, and to forbear making known my claim until the return of Lord Ellincourt and his amiable mother should render my darling's situation secure, during the time neccessary for the investigation that is to restore her to her rights in society; that happy moment approaches, for Lady Ellincourt is expected every day."

"I know it," said Fanny, interrupting her father. "I have received a letter from her own dear hand, announcing that blessed news."

"Lord Ellincourt," replied Mr. Hamilton, "has married a daughter of Mr. Barlowe, my old friend and trustee; and in her person, my sweet girl owns another sincere friend."

"I owe to Emily Barlowe's kindness," said Fanny, "all the happinesss I now enjoy, for her bounty saved me from the cruel fate Miss Bridewell had destined me to, I should certainly have

been sent to the workhouse, but for her kind interference.

"My child has been the peculiar care of Providence," answered Mr. Hamilton, "through every eventful period of her life, and to that divine and unerring protection do I still commend her.

"May the seraph that watches over innocence, still hover near to keep my darling, until her fond father can acknowledge her to the world.

"I must now re-conduct my Fanny to her chamber, for the night wears apace; and although the interest of my story has kept you waking, I can plainly see the traces of fatigue upon your countenance. Return to your rest, my child, and may the blessing of a father seal your slumbers; I shall not see my dear girl again, until I come to claim her, for I am going to set off for London by the dawn of day, to meet the Ellincourts on their arrival, and to arrange matters for the important changes that must take place; Mrs. Bolton will accompany me." So saying, Mr. Hamilton embraced his daughter, who then clasped her arms round Mrs. Bolton's neck, and sobbed her adieu.

"What shall I do," said the sweet girl, "with the newly awakened feelings of my agitated heart? How conceal them from the penetrating eyes of Colonel Ross?" "You must keep in mind," replied Mr. Hamilton, "that he is the brother of Lord Ballafyn, and the *friend* of the cruel persecutor of your sainted mother, as well as your fond father's bitterest enemy. Surely these reflections cannot fail of producing the necessary caution."

Mr. Hamilton now led Fanny back by the same way she had come, and having seen her safe through the mysterious pannel, bid her a final adieu.

It was in vain that the agitated girl threw herself upon her bed, sleep, under the impressions that now filled her mind, was impossible; and morning surprised her, before she had closed her eyes for a

single instant. She arose therefore from her pillow. and employed the intermediate time between that and breakfast, in removing as much as possible, the traces of fatigue and weeping from her countenance, She succeeded better than she expected, and descended to the breakfast parlour, with tolerable composure; the day passed without any material occurrence, and Fanny retired at an early hour to her chamber, under the plea of a bad head-ache, that she might renovate her exhausted spirits by a good night's rest.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Consternation.

It has already been observed, that Fanny inhabited one of the suite of apartments belonging to Lady Ellincourt, and that consequently she was a considerable distance from any room that was occupied; this recollection had been a consolation to her whilst engaged in her nocturnal visit, as her absence from her chamber was less likely to be discovered.

On the morning following Fanny's early retreat to her pillow, Lady Maria Ross was surprised at her not appearing at breakfast, although the usual hour was long past. "I cannot think what is become of Fanny," said her ladyship to the Colonel, "she is never so late as this, do ring, and desire the servant to enquire for her." The Colonel rang the

bell; "I dare say," said he, carelessly, "she is gone to take a romantic stroll this fine morning. The girl's head is half-turned, I believe, with some lover;" when the servant appeared, "desire my woman to enquire for Miss Fanny," said Lady Maria, "and tell her that breakfast waits." The servant presently returned, 'Miss Fanny's door is fastened,' said he, 'and Mrs. Brown cannot make her hear.' "Lady Maria started up from the table, the dear girl is ill," exclaimed she, "and I am to blame for suffering her to sleep in that desolate part of the house." So saying, Lady Maria made immediately to Fanny's apartments, followed by Colonel Ross, and the servants, on whose countenances were impressed the most lively symptoms of terror."

"Lady Maria called aloud upon the name of her young friend, but without receiving any answer. Let the door be immediately forced," exclaimed her ladyship, "some fatal accident has befallen my beloved Fanny." Colonel Ross smiled; "she is gone to take a walk I dare say," said he, sarcastically, "such sentimental ladies love rambling of a morning." "But why then should her door be fast," enquired her ladyship." "Oh! she has locked it to conceal some half finished love ditty," answered the Colonel, "depend upon it all this fright is for nothing."

Lady Maria paid but little attention to what her husband said, and the proper implements being brought, the door was broken open: but what was the consternation of all present, when upon entering the chamber it was found empty, and from the state of the bed it was evident that Fanny had never been into it. Several things lay scattered about the apartment in confusion, and on the ground lay one of the bracelets she had worn the preceding evening; Lady Maria picked it up, the clasp was bent as if a heavy foot had trodden upon it, and crushed it. "The dear girl has been forcibly

dragged away," said her terrified friend, as she examined the bracelet. Alas! my dear Fanny, what may have been your sufferings when you dropped this!

"What romance has your ladyship been reading lately?" said the Colonel, affecting to laugh, though it was evident he was much agitated. "If the girl *is* gone, depend upon it she went *willingly*. For Heaven's sake who do you think would take the trouble of *dragging* her away against her will?

"But, for my part, I cannot imagine how she got away, unless, indeed, it be by the window; for you see the other door is fastened on the inside."

"The window would then have been open," said Lady Maria, "so *that* conjecture must be erroneous." On examining Fanny's drawers, it appeared plain that several articles of her apparel had been taken out of them with apparent hurry, for those left within were rumpled and displaced. A small black trunk too, that used to stand in the room, was missing, and from all these circumstances, it was evident that Fanny was gone, and had taken some clothes with her, and by that it appeared that she was not unwilling to go, or she would not have made provision for her flight. But *whither* or *how* she was gone, it was impossible to conjecture, although every one's mind suggested something, either probable or improbable, to account for her strange disappearance. Amongst the servants, it was confidently believed, that she had been spirited away by some supernatural power; and a thousand stories were reported of ghosts and goblins that had formerly been said to haunt Pemberton-Abbey. Nor was the circumstance of Fanny's terror, on the night she was visited by Mrs. Bolton, forgotten amongst the relation of wonders. The servants all agreed that the ghost had visited the child as a token that it meant to fetch

her away as soon as she should be grown to woman's estate; and before the shades of evening had gathered around them, the impression of self-created terror was so strong upon their minds, that none of them would venture to go singly into any part of the house."

Lady Maria's terror was not inferior to that which dismayed her servants, although she felt no belief that Fanny had been torn from her by any supernatural agency. The fate of one she loved so tenderly, thus strongly involved in mystery, filled her amiable heart with anguish, and she wept incessantly, without being able to conjecture what could become of her, or to suggest any probable means of recovering her.

"There appeared no probable, nor, indeed, *possible* means of her having left her room, as both the doors were fastened on the inside, unless, indeed, there were some secret entrance to the chamber: an idea which the lately revived story, or the nocturnal visit Fanny had received, in that same apartment, when a child, seemed certainly to warrant.

"The examination of the wainscot, however, by the best carpenter they could procure, turned out just the same as a former one had done, when resorted to by lady Ellincourt, to elucidate the mystery that at that time filled Pemberton-Abbey with dismay.

The Colonel, during the whole of the bustle, affected the utmost unconcern. "The girl is so artful," said he, "that I am not surprised at any contrivance of her's to throw an air of mystery over her departure. She has run away with some of her gallants, and, no doubt, imagines her story will make a fine novel, by and bye, when the miracle of her having been conveyed away through the *key-hole*, comes to be added to it. That adventurer, who calls himself Hamilton,

has been seen in this neighbourhood within these few days: and, you may depend upon it, she is gone with him, for she was stark mad about him before we left London."

"And will you not send to trace the fugitives?" asked Lady Maria, "or at least to ascertain whether Fanny is, *indeed,* gone willingly?

"Not I, indeed," answered the Colonel. "Girls, such as Fanny, are not so scarce, that men need risk their lives to obtain them. She went *willingly,* or she would not have gone at all, and therefore I deem her not worth seeking after."

Lady Maria was deeply hurt at her husband's apparent apathy, and although she could not make him do what he ought to have done, for the recovery of her favourite friend, she secretly employed several of her neighbouring farmers, to make dilligent search for her beloved Fanny. These enquiries though made with the sincerest wish to succeed, were however fruitless; not the smallest light could be thrown upon the subject, and a whole week elapsed, without Lady Maria being able to obtain the smallest atom of intelligence.

In the mean time, Colonel Ross was making preparations for his departure for Ireland, to which place he now expressed himself very impatient to set out, and although he received a letter from Lord Ellincourt, announcing his arrival in London, and his intention of visiting Pemberton-Abbey, in the course of two days, the Colonel refused to stay to receive his lordship, but set off on his journey the very day Lord Ellincourt was expected, leaving an apology with Lady Maria for his friend: alleging as an excuse that he had received a very urgent letter from Lord Ballafyn, to request his immediate presence in Ireland.

In a few hours after Colonel Ross's departure,

Lord Ellincourt arrived at Pemberton Abbey. Feeble, indeed, would be any attempt of mine, to describe the rage and distraction that seized his lordship, when he heard the fatal tale of Fanny's disappearance; Lady Maria was perfectly terrified at his violence.

As soon as he would permit me to speak, she mentioned Colonel Ross's supposition, that Fanny had been taken away by Mr. Hamilton. "It is false," exclaimed Lord Ellincourt, "it is basely false, and Ross knows it is so. I saw Mr. Hamilton yesterday, in London, and I am the bearer of a letter from him, to his *daughter:* for such is the unfortunate Fanny, to that amiable man."

"No, no," continued his lordship, "not heeding the astonishment he saw pourtrayed upon Lady Maria's features, no no, if she be spirited away, it is by the vile Somertown, or some of *his* miscreants, and by Colonel Ross's sang-froid in this dreadful affair, I suspect he knows something of the plot, but by heavens, they shall soon know that they have roused a *lion,* when they angered me, and I will make them produce my Fanny, or by heavens, I will shoot every mother's son of them. I will immediately return to London, and set on foot a search, which shall find the lost jewel, if they have hid her at the *antipodes.*"

It was in vain that Lady Maria endeavoured to persuade Lord Ellincourt to take any refreshment, he would not hear of it. He just took a survey of poor Fanny's forsaken apartment, made a cursory examination of the servants, and jumping into his carriage, he returned full speed to London, leaving poor Lady Maria overwhelmed with grief, terror, and astonishment.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Elucidation.

It is now time to return to Fanny, whose disappearance from Pemberton Abbey, must have excited the reader's curiosity, and perhaps some degree of sympathy.

On the night this mysterious circumstance occurred, it has already been said that Fanny, fatigued by the preceding night's watching, had retired early to her chamber to seek the repose she stood so much in need of. It was Fanny's invariable custom on entering on her apartment for the night, to offer up her prayers and thanksgivings to her Maker. Whilst employed in this sacred duty, she was startled by the creaking of the mysterious pannel, and rising from her kneeling posture, was surprised to see it partly open. Yet notwithstanding her surprise, she was not alarmed, as she concluded that her father had forgotten something he wished to mention to her, and had commissioned Mrs. Bolton to acquaint her with it. She drew near the opening, therefore, without apprehension, for she imagined that Mrs. Bolton, not being so strong as her father, found some difficulty in removing the barrier that opposed her entrance, and Fanny put out her hand to assist her. What then was her terror and dismay, when she saw two horrid looking men enter at the aperture,

and immediately felt herself seized by them, and a handkerchief tied over her mouth, to prevent her from giving utterance to her fears.

"Come, Miss," said one of the wretches, "as you are so fond of Midnight vagaries, *fegs*, you shall have enough of them. I suppose you thought yourself mighty cunning, but you see there are some folks as cunning as you." Struggling and almost dying in the rude grasp that held her, Fanny had still resolution enough to keep herself from fainting, and by a strenuous effort, succeeded at length in removing the handkerchief from her mouth, sufficiently to ask what they intended to do with her. "Oh, you are only going a little journey with your old beau," replied one of the men, laughing, "Where's the trunk?" continued he, turning to his comrade, "did not Mabel say she had packed it?" "Yes, yes," replied the other ruffian, "it stands in yonder corner;" if you will take the young gentlewoman down, I will bring the trunk."

At these words the other man seized Fanny in his arms, and was taking her through the pannel, when by a dexterous struggle she got from him, and running towards the window, began screaming aloud. This lasted only for an instant, for she was immediately seized, and the handkerchief placed in such a manner over her mouth, that she found it impossible to remove it. "You oblige us to be rough with you, Miss," said one of the men, "so if you don't like it, you may thank yourself for it."

She was now wholly overcome by terror, and was carried along the narrow passage through which she had passed the night before into the house, where she had been acknowledged by her father, without making an attempt to escape from her persecutors, or even uttering a groan. When she arrived at the apartment where she had listened to Mr. Hamilton's interesting narrative, she was

met by an elderly woman, who reprimanded the men for the violence they seemed to have used towards their charge. "Well then, why did she not come along quietly?" said one of the men, "she must have seen it was of no use to try her strength with us, but you may do as you please with her now, for nobody can hear her in this place, let her bawl ever so."

The woman now removed the handkerchief, and seating Fanny on a chair, endeavoured to soothe her, whilst the men returned to her forsaken apartment to fetch the little trunk, which had been prepared by the woman for her departure, and which contained a sufficient change of linen, &c. for the journey she was about to take; these things had been taken from Fanny's drawers, by the woman these men called Mabel, and whom Fanny rightly supposed to be the person Mr. Hamilton had said was formerly a servant of his, and who had been placed there at the commencement of his unfortunate marriage, in order to facilitate the meetings between himself and the ill-fated Emily.

Fanny vainly endeavoured to persuade the woman to suffer her to escape. She was inexorable to all her intreaties; when the poor girl found her eloquence unavailing to prevail with her gaoler, to restore her to freedom, she then strove to penetrate the cause of her detention. "For what reason," said the weeping girl, "am I deprived of my liberty? who is it that thus cruelly tears me from the asylum that protected me, surely Mr. Hamilton cannot be an impostor."

"Whether he is or no, it is most like you will never see him again," replied the woman, "so don't let that trouble you; the person who removes you, does it out of pure kindness to save you from a worse fate. You are going a little journey, and it will be your own fault if you don't make your fortune. But here comes Robin and Franklyn, so hold your tongue, o

it will be worse for you;" the men now entered the room, and one of them declared that the carriage was come. Poor Fanny was obliged to submit to have the bandage re-placed over her mouth, and being wrapt in a large cloak, she was conveyed to a post chaise that was in waiting at the door of the house. More dead than alive, the poor victim was lifted into it by the men, but unable to keep her seat, she dropped apparently senseless on the bottom of the carriage. "Come Mabel," cried one of the men, "you had better get into the chaise, and support the poor girl in your arms, she will die else before she reaches the water, and then you know the Colonel will blow us to the old one."

The woman obeyed the injunction, charging her husband to take care of the house. "Aye, aye," replied he, "never you fear, the house is well able to take care of itself."

Although Fanny was incapable of speaking or moving, she heard every word that was spoken; and when the Colonel's name struck her ear, her heart died within her, for she did not doubt but that the violence she was suffering, originated in Lord Somertown's malice; and the recollection of the note she had lost so unaccountably, and which she had forgotten to mention to Mr. Hamilton, made her imagine that the secret of that gentleman's existence was discovered by his inveterate foe.

The agonizing fear this idea created, was too much for poor Fanny to support, and dropping her head upon Mabel's shoulder, she fainted away.

The woman, whose heart was not quite obdurate, although she had been seduced for the sake of a large sum of money, which had been promised her, to lend her aid to this cruel violence, felt herself seriously alarmed, and called to the drivers of the carriage to stop, that she might make some effort to revive her unfortunate companion; but no

attention was paid, to her entreaties, and when she exalted her voice in order to make herself better heard, her husband, who was on horse back, rode up to the carriage, and threatened her with his horse-whip, if she did not hold her tongue.

By this time Fanny had revived, and finding by Mabel's lamentations, that she had awakened some sympathy in her bosom, she began imploring her to inform her whither her persecutors were conveying her.

"Did not I hear something about accompanying me to the water?" said the trembling girl, "Surely they are not going to send me out of England." And as she spoke she thought upon Mr. Hamilton's narrative, where he described what he had suffered on a similar occasion, when sent on board a vessel by Lord Somertown.

"Lord bless your poor heart," replied Mabel, "you must not frighten yourself so, that's what you must not, else I am certain sure you will not live to go any where. And if so be you are to be taken over sea, you may depend upon it, great care will be taken of you, and you will be a great Lady, and very happy, or it must be your own fault; for the Col. said as how, that if a hair of your head was hurt, he would be the death of the person that injured you; and, indeed, Miss I would not have had any thing to do with the *conspiration*, if I had not *knowed* that you was not to be *hurted*."

"You seem to pity me," said Fanny, "I hope, therefore, wherever I am going, that you will accompany me."

"I shall go with you to the water side, I dare say, Miss, but no farther."

"And where am I going to then?" said Fanny

"Oh lauke, Miss, I must not tell you, if I *knowed*, for Franklyn would kill me; but I *do not know*, I only *guesses*—

"Then," interrupted Fanny, "there can sure be no harm in guessing."

"Well, if you won't tell what you know, Miss, I will just whisper what I suspect. I fancy you *be* going to Ireland.

"To Ireland," ejaculated Fanny."

"There now, Miss, you talk so loud, Franklyn will hear you, and then he will kill me as sure as a gun."

"I will be more cautious," said Fanny, lowering her voice; "but what can they be taking me to Ireland for?"

"Oh dear, I am sure that is more than I can tell," answered Mabel; "I wish they had let you stay where you was; but they know their own business I suppose; though I am sure, I be frightened out of my wits between one thing and t'other."

"Pray do ask your husband to let you go with me," said Fanny; "I shall think myself safe if they do not take you from me."

"Dear heart, Miss, I dare not ask no such thing," answered the woman, "for my husband is the most *snappishest* man you ever *seed* in your life, and would not mind more than nothing at all, giving me a black eye, or any other bruise, if I was to go about to *circumvent* him."

"I must submit to my fate then," said Fanny, sighing, "for I am sure, I would not be the occasion of suffering to any one, if I could avoid it, for all the world."

Fanny now threw herself back in the carriage, and sunk into a silent reverie. Fatigue and excessive weeping, soon converted that reverie into a slumber, and she awoke not until the chaise stopped for refreshment and change of horses at a lone house upon a dreary common. Day was just peeping through the eastern sky and gave

light enough to shew to the unhappy Fanny the hopelessness of her situation.

The two men who had torn her from her chamber kept close watch by the carriage, whilst the horses were changed, and took especial care that the few persons who were up at the little inn where they had halted, should not approach near enough the chaise to converse with Fanny, had she been inclined to call them for succour.

One of the men pulled a little basket from the boot, and took from it a bottle of wine, and a parcel of cake, part of which he offered respectfully to Fanny. At first she refused to touch it; but, on Mabel's declaring that she would immediately quit her, unless she consented to take some refreshment, poor Fanny submitted, and swallowed half a glass of wine, and eat a small biscuit.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The Hibernian.

Poor Fanny's dreary journey continued through the whole of the ensuing day, only stopping for change of horses, which were found at some lone place waiting for the approach of the chaise, which kept its way through bye-lanes and trackless wastes, avoiding cautiously every habitation.

Fanny, who now gave herself up for lost, sunk

into a state of apathy, which almost rendered her callous to the misery of her situation, and she remained perfectly passive by the side of Mabel, who overcome by fatigue, had fallen into a profound slumber.

They continued travelling long after night had set in; and the darkness that now enveloped every object, prevented Fanny from distinguishing the country she was passing through. At length the carriage stopped, and the hollow-sounding wind that then struck her ear, accompanied by the loud dashing of water, convinced the unhappy sufferer that she was near the sea.

A new agony of terror now pervaded her soul, and roused her from the torpor which had seized her; and when the man whom Mabel called Franklyn, approached the chaise and opened the door of it, Fanny screamed aloud, and, clasping her arms round Mabel's neck, implored her not to leave her.

The woman, who was just awakened from her nap, was terrified at Fanny's violence, and began weeping excessively, and promised that she would not leave her.

"Here's a fine to do!" exclaimed the ruffian, taking Fanny in his arms, and lifting her in spite of her struggles, from the chaise. He was soon, however, obliged to alter his behaviour; for the terror occasioned by his violence, so completely overpowered Fanny, that she sunk lifeless on the ground, and he and every other person present, believed that she had indeed breathed her last.

"Let us make haste and get her on board," said Franklyn, "and then we can swear she died of sea sickness."

"No, that you sha'n't," exclaimed Mabel; "for I vow I will betray you, if you do not directly get some help for this poor dear lamb. I'll tell the Colonel it was your ill usage killed her."

"Don't you know, Mrs. Chatterbox," answered

her husband, "that *you* may be silenced before you expect it; so don't let me have any of your threats."

But although he carried such an air of bravado with his wife he was dreadfully alarmed lest the poor victim had sunk under her sufferings, and calling the other men to assist him, they conveyed Fanny into a little cottage belonging to the fisherman in whose skiff they were going to embark their hapless charge.

Several hours elapsed before Fanny shewed the least symptom of recovery; at length by the tender assiduities of Mabel and the fisherman's wife, she slowly revived; and having been persuaded to swallow a little wine and water, she was able to speak.

The first question she asked, was, whether Mabel would stay with her? The woman assured her, with tears, that she would, and intreated her to try to take a little rest, pledging at the same time, her word, in the most solemn manner, that she would not quit her bed-side whilst she slept.

Fatigue and excessive suffering, both of body and mind, had entirely exhausted Fanny's strength, and she willingly yielded to the drowsiness that overpowered her, now she had received such assurances of security whilst she indulged it.

She awoke not until the day was far spent, and found Mabel seated on one side of her bed, and the fisherman's wife on the other, with the strongest anxiety painted on their countenances. At first her ideas were too much confused to allow her to recollect where she was; but as they became more clear, the dreadful truth flashed upon her mind, and she burst into tears.

"Don't cry, there's a dear young lady," exclaimed Mabel; "I have got leave from my husband to cross the water with you, and, I warrant

me, nobody shall hurt you whilst I be with you. Lauk a me, if I had knowed what a deal of unhappiness I should have had on your account, I would no more have undertaken the business than I'd a *flyed*, that's what I would not; no not for twice the money the Colonel has promised us."

"Oh! contrive some means for my escape," exclaimed Fanny, "and if gold is the object which has induced your husband and you to betray me, I will promise you twice the sum he is to give you, and fear not that I can pay you, for I am sure, Lady Ellincourt will not hesitate to ransom me, as soon as she knows the service you have done me."

"Lauk, Miss, you talk just as if I could do what I likes, and you forgets I have a husband, and a queer jockey he is too, as ever a poor woman was troubled with; but *howsomdever*, if you will but go quietly along with the folks as be conveying you to Ireland, why it shall go hard but I will send somebody after you as shall get you back again in a crack; but if you goes about to be *rumbustical*, and the like of that, why then my husband will kill me, and then you know I cannot tell your friends, and I defy Satan himself to find you, unless I blab the secret: so you see what you have to trust to."

Fanny uttered a deep sigh as she listened to Mabel's strange exhortation, for she felt too truly how much her chance of escaping depended upon the exertions of that woman, to dare to contradict a tittle of what she advanced. She wondered much that Mabel should speak so openly before the fisherman's wife, of affairs that certainly endangered her own safety, should they be made public; this surprise subsided, however, when she found soon afterwards, that the poor woman was quite deaf; a circumstance that gave her real concern, as she had hoped, from the humanity ex-

pressed in her countenance, that she should have been able to interest her in her behalf; this was impossible it plainly appeared, for she must have spoken so loud that, in such a small house, every thing she said would have been in danger of being overheard by Franklyn and the other men.

Poor Fanny was obliged, therefore, to be silent, and commit herself to the care of that God, who was alone able to deliver her. As soon as Franklyn understood that Fanny was awake, he insisted upon her being put immediately on board the little vessel that lay waiting for her in a creek near the fisherman's habitation. Resistance was in vain; Fanny therefore submitted without making any, and was presently conveyed into the miserable little cabin of the fishing smack. But here a fresh trial awaited her, and her fortitude had nearly forsaken her when she found that, notwithstanding his promise to let Mabel cross the water with her, that barbarous Franklyn insisted upon leaving his wife behind, Fanny's tears and entreaties availed her nothing; the vessel was soon under weigh, and the hapless girl launched on the boundless ocean, accompanied only by the most unprincipled of ruffians.

The fear of fainting, surrounded by such a horrid crew, made Fanny exert an energy she was before unconscious of possessing, and lifting up her heart in prayer to the God in whom she trusted, her countenance assumed a look of patient fortitude, that astonished her persecutors.

"Miss looks *terrible* well now," exclaimed Franklyn, to one of the other men, "it is only my whimpering wife made her bad before; I wish I had sent her back sooner, we should have been across the herring-pond by this time."

The wind being exactly fair, with a light breeze, a few hours wafted them over, and the shores of Ireland presented themselves to their view. The

vessel ran into a narrow creek, under a chain of hills that seemed the counterpart of the one they had just left on the other side. Here they disembarked, and Fanny was conveyed to a miserable mud cabin, where he was obliged to wait whilst the owner of it, at the request of Franklyn, went in search of a car, to carry her to the place of her destination, which she understood, from the conversation of those around her, was at the distance of three miles.

To those who have never seen the interior of a cabin in Ireland, it would be in vain to attempt to give an idea of the scene that presented itself to Fanny, on her entering that abode of poverty and wretchedness. Those who *have* seen one, will readily admit the picture to be true, when I describe it. Around a fire, made upon the hearth, and composed of damp turf, whose suffocating smoke rendered them almost invisible, stood six squalid looking children, of different sizes; all, except the youngest, clothed in tattered garments of a thousand different hues. *That* poor *little* thing had no other covering but what heaven had given it, and seemed to keep close to its brothers and sisters, in order to shelter itself from the chill blast that entered at the open door as well as at the hole in the wall which supplied the place of a window: a crook was on the fire, full of potatoes, which, with a little buttermilk, was the only food ever tasted by the wretched family. Fanny shrunk back, horror-struck by the scene before her, but instantly recollecting her forlorn situation, she advanced at the entreaty of the mistress of the wretched hovel, and took possession of a seat that was placed for her near the fire, from whence the children were immediately driven by their mother to make room for the *stranger,* a character always sacred in the eyes of the Irish. Fanny intreated that the poor little creatures might be permitted to

remain; no sense of suffering, no fear of personal inconvenience could, for an instant induce her to forget the feelings of others, and the natural benevolence of her heart, could only be extinguished by the suspension of life itself. The men who were at once the persecutors of Fanny, and her guard, now entered the cottage, bearing a basket containing provisions; some refreshment was offered to Fanny, but she refused it, and entreated that what was intended for her use, might be distributed amongst the poor objects around her. This request was complied with, and Fanny felt her sorrows for awhile suspended by the heartfelt satisfaction of beholding a group of starving children made happy by her bounty. It is impossible to describe the joy of the poor little creatures, at the partition of the food, or to do justice to the surprise and delight, painted on their meagre countenances, whilst partaking of such uncommon fare. The mother stood by, contemplating her offspring with silent pleasure, and when pressed to take a part of the dainties, she declined the invitation.

"Let the *children* eat it all," said she, "it does me more good to look at them, than to eat any myself." Fanny's eyes filled with tears, as she listened to this tender expression of unsophisticated nature, and mechanically putting her hand into her pocket, she drew forth a purse, and took from it a small piece of gold, which she destined for the affectionate mother.

The action was unperceived by either of the men, or perhaps it might have been productive of bad consequences to the benevolent Fanny; who at the moment of doing it, had so totally forgotten all her own sufferings, that no idea of *bribery* associated itself with the destined gift.

The return of the man with the car he had been sent for, now obliged Fanny to quit the wretched

hovel, and had it been any thing less miserable than it was, she would have done so with reluctance; because she found it contained a human heart, capable of feeling. Whilst the men were busy placing Fanny's little trunk upon the vehicle that awaited her, and arranging some clean straw for her accommodation; she found an opportunity of slipping the little piece of money into the poor woman's hand. Scarcely could the wretched creature believe her senses, when she looked upon the welcome gift, but no sooner was she convinced that she held the value of *seven thirteens* in her hand, than dropping on her knee she called down blessings on the donor's head, with all the enthusiastic gratitude, which is characteristic of her country. Fanny implored her to rise, for she felt the danger of the men's return, and putting her hand over her mouth, besought her to be silent. "And so I will, my lady," cried the poor woman, "because you desire it, but oh! it is fit you should know that you have saved me and mine from starving, for now we can pay our cruel landlord and then he will not drive our pig, before it is half big enough, and so ruin us for ever. Oh! and it is Dermot who is grateful, he will never forget your goodness, and if it should ever fall out that he can do you service, he will go through fire and water to do it. We are *poor* my lady, but our hearts can feel a kindness with the richest lord in christendom. "I am no lady," cried Fanny, "but an unhappy girl, even more destitute than you are."

"Then you shall not rob yourself to help us," replied the woman, attempting to return the seven shilling piece: "You mistake me," said Fanny, "I do not want *money*, it is friends I stand in need of, so keep it, good woman, and let me have your prayers." "Yes, and you *will* have them, my sweet jewel," replied the woman, "and if it is *friends* you

want, it is Dermot that will be one to you, for he will watch you by night and by day; just at this moment, Franklyn entered to say the car was ready, and Fanny made a sign to her new friend to be silent, the woman took the hint, and immediately obeyed it; but she followed Fanny to the door, and assisted in placing her on the car." The men walked on each side of the vehicle; and Dermot, her promised friend, was the driver of the sorry horse that drew her along. Fanny could scarcely refrain from a smile, when she contemplated the ragged figure of the protector, so boastingly promised her by his grateful wife. Alas! thought she, I am persecuted by the powerful and rich, how then can such a poor creature as that, assist me to escape from the grasp of oppression? and yet my help must come from *Heaven*, and there is no means too insignificant to become the instruments of deliverance in the hands of almighty power. With thoughts like these, did the innocent Fanny amuse her pensive mind, during her tedious journey; for although the distance was no more than three Irish miles, the road was so extremely bad, that she was above two hours and a half confined to the uneasy vehicle that conveyed her, whose creaking wheels, as they turned slowly round, added by their mournful sound to the melancholy that oppressed her. The day was closing in, when Fanny left the cabin, and the shades of evening enveloped the landscape, as she approached the end of her journey.

Yet still the lofty battlements of a large castle that rose on an eminence before her, could not be hidden by the dusky veil. Fanny shuddered as she gazed upon the immense prison, for such she feared it would prove to her, and once or twice a thought of her unfortunate mother crossed her imagination, and she could not help fancying that this might have been the scene of her sufferings.

The gate of the castle was opened, on Franklyn's knocking, by an old man who appeared as if his birth had been coeval with the building of the castle. He seemed to have expected the arrival of Fanny and her escort, for he immediately led the way through two court yards to an inner range of buildings, when an elderly woman of no very prepossessing appearance, came out to meet them. She welcomed Fanny to Ballafyn Castle, and confirmed the suspicions which had before arisen in her mind.

Scarcely now could her trembling legs support her exhausted frame; and she was obliged to lean upon the woman's arm as she walked through the long passage that led to the apartment that was prepared for her. When she entered the room, she sunk upon the first chair she came to, without ever casting a single glance at the magnificence that surrounded her.

"You seem very ill, Miss," said the woman in a sharp tone, "perhaps you are tired, and had rather go to bed, than sit up to supper. I can assure you, there is a very nice one got for you. My Lord gave orders that you should have the best of every thing."

"I would, indeed, wish to retire to bed," answered Fanny, "the fatigue I have suffered has quite overcome me."

"Well, Miss, I will order Rose to warm your bed directly, and return to show you the way to it."

"I thank you;" answered Fanny, "the sooner the better," and as she spoke every limb shook with agitation and terror.

The woman left the room without observing her emotion, and Fanny had no leisure to observe the room she was in, which appeared to be one of the best in the Castle, for it was furnished in a style of grandeur that, accustomed as Fanny was to the mansions of the great, struck her with surprise. But alas! the trappings of magnificence,

can boast but few charms for the truly wretched, and Fanny turned with horror from the contemplation.

These very walls had once contained her mother, and perhaps, could they speak, might have told a tale of murder! The woman had said, "My Lord has ordered that you shall have every thing of the best." Did she then mean Lord Ballafyn? Surely not! for how could he be interested about a person he had never seen. No, no, the infernal agent in this dark business could be no other than Colonel Ross; and her soul shuddered as she thought upon the motive that had induced him to take such a step as that of immuring her in a prison, from which it appeared to her finite ideas, impossible to escape.

While she was engaged in this unpleasant reverie, the woman returned, and told her the bed was ready Fanny arose immediately, and followed her guide into a large hall, in which was the great staircase, they ascended its marble steps, and entered a long gallery with doors on each side, one of them was partly open, and the light within shewed that it was prepared for a guest. Fanny's guide stopped at this door, and told her that was her apartment. On entering the room, Fanny found it was an elegant bed room, with every requisite for her accommodation. A young woman, of a pleasant open countenance was warming the bed; and Fanny observed that she seemed to look at her with peculiar complacency as she dropped her curtesy, and bade her welcome at her entrance. Here Fanny found also her trunk, the key of which was given her by the old woman, who said at the same time, "I hope you will find every thing you want, Miss, in this room; but if you should not, you have nothing to do, but to ring, and either Rose, or I, will immediately wait upon you.

Fanny thanked her; but said she was in want

of nothing, "Excepting, indeed," added she, with a sigh, "that I want my *liberty*."

"Oh, as to that, answered the old woman, "I warrant me, you will have liberty enough when my Lord comes, for he is very good to pretty young girls; and if he had not liked you, he would not have given such orders about you, nor been at all this expence and trouble to get you here."

"Pray," asked Fanny, "who is your lord, if I may take the liberty to enquire."

"Lord Ballafyn is my lord," answered the old woman, "and as noble a gentleman as any in the north of Ireland; but I dare say you know that as well as I do."

"I never saw Lord Ballafyn in my life," answered Fanny, "and therefore cannot imagine why he should take so much trouble about me."

"Oh! who knows," answered the beldame, "perhaps he is going to make a lady of you; there is such a likeness between you and my late lady, that you might pass for her, only you are rather too young."

"How long has your lady been dead?" asked Fanny. "Above fifteen years," answered the old woman, "but come, this is only keeping you out of your bed, when you must want to be in it by your pale looks."

"Oh no, I do not want to go to bed," said Fanny, "for I am sure in this strange place it will be impossible for me to sleep; is there any body that sleeps near me?"

"Oh yes, my husband and I sleep next room but one, and Rose in the adjoining apartment. We are airing the house against my Lord and his visitors come, so we sleep in all the beds in their turn."

"If you should want any thing, Miss," said Rose, good-naturedly, "you need only tap against the wall, there is a door opens into this room out of the one where I sleep."

Fanny's mind was a little calmed by this intelligence, and she wished the two women good night, and as soon as they were gone, she threw herself upon her knees, and implored the Divine Protection, succeeded so far in subduing her terrors, that she arose from her kneeling posture, and began to prepare for bed. The fatigue she had suffered of late, joined to her anxiety of mind, had entirely exhausted her strength, and miserable as she felt herself, her grief yielded to the weariness that came over her, and she dropped asleep in a few minutes after she was in bed; nor once awoke until the broad beam of morning had illuminated her chamber.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Retrospection.

When Lord Ellincourt returned to London, his first care was to find Mr. Hamilton, and apprise him of Fanny's disappearance. It is impossible to describe the consternation this information excited in the breast of that afflicted father—"Depend upon it, the detestable Lord Somertown," said he, "is at the bottom of this infernal plot; I heard him once threaten the sweet creature when he was unconscious that he was speaking aloud—the provocation that induced this brutality was some attention shewn to Fanny by his nephew the duke of

Albemarle: his lordship seemed to think he degraded himself by his partiality for the lovely girl, little imagining that she was the lawful heiress to the honours and estates which constituted the supposed superiority; I reprimanded Lord Somertown in a voice that made him tremble, for he thought it came from the grave, and the conscience-stricken wretch fell down in a fit."

"What a pity his conscience did not choak him," said Lord Ellincourt, "but good Heavens! what shall we do to find the dear girl? It matters little who is the instigator of this violence unless we can trace the instruments employed to execute it: I have strong suspicions that Ross is concerned in it, or at least bribed to pass it over without investigation. It is very odd he should set off for Ireland when he knew I was expected, and that before any decisive step had been taken to trace the lovely girl: By heavens if I could ascertain that it is so, I would follow the villain to Ireland, and shoot him as I would a crow."

"We had better take every possible precaution here," said Mr. Hamilton, "before we talk of going to *Ireland*."

"I will go to Bow Street," said Lord Ellincourt, "and set all the thief-hunting hounds in full cry after the culprits who have stolen my Fanny, if they are above ground we will find them —I will advertise her in all the papers; you know I told you I found the sweet girl through an advertisement at first, so perhaps we may be as lucky now."

"I have been thinking," said Mr. Hamilton, interrupting Lord Ellincourt, "that if I were to attempt to obtain an interview with Lord Somertown, and suddenly discover myself, and demand my daughter, the terrors of his conscience might lead him to betra something of the plot, if he is indeed concerned in it."

"A very good scheme," said Lord Ellincourt, "and I will accompany you as soon as I have been to Bow Street, for I should like to shoot him too, just by way of bringing my hand in, before I attempt winging Ross: for I think it will turn out he is entitled to a share. But in the mean time where is my darling girl, my innocent, charming, Fanny?—Upon my soul I believe I shall run stark mad, if I do not soon find her."

"What then must be my feelings?" exclaimed Mr. Hamilton.

"Why, not half so bad as mine," answered his lively lordship—"I have brought the dear creature up, watched the progress of her angelic mind, and seen her goodness bud and blossom with her beauty; I am sure if I were indeed her father, I could not love her better. As yet my poor mother knows nothing of this calamity, and Emily too, there will be fine weeping and wailing when the sad tale is told."

Mr. Hamilton accompanied Lord Ellincourt to Bow Street, where proper information was lodged, and a description of Fanny's person given. The large reward offered by both Mr. Hamilton and Lord Ellincourt, insured the attention and exertions of the men employed in the search, and they did not hesitate in promising a speedy eclaircissement of the mystery.

Lord Ellincourt now reluctantly returned towards home, in order to inform his mother, and wife, of the disaster that distressed him, and to prepare advertisements for the papers of the ensuing day. Mr. Hamilton, at his particular request, accompanied him, for he had already been introduced to both the Ladies Ellincourt, and received as the father of the amiable girl that had been so long dear to them.

I will not pretend to describe the distress felt by those amiable ladies when they heard the mournful

news. The Dowager Lady Ellincourt, who loved the unfortunate Fanny for her own sake before she knew who she was, now held her doubly dear, as the sole surviving offspring of a lamented brother. What then were her agonizing feelings when the melancholy fate of that beloved brother was so forcibly recalled to her memory by the mysterious disappearance of his hapless grandchild; in vain did young Lady Ellincourt smother her own grief, under the appearance of confidence in the speedy recovery of the lost jewel, and endeavour to impart the consolation of hope to her dseponding mother. Lady Dowager Ellincourt would not listen to the voice of comfort.

"It is *my* fault," said she, weeping, "I ought not to have parted with the lovely girl—alas into what hands have I confided her. Oh! my brother, how would your injured shade reproach your careless sister, could you be conscious that to her imprudence is owing this unsupportable calamity, the extinction of thy last surviving heir!"

Lord Ellincourt used every argument his imagination could suggest to calm his mother's sorrow, but finding her inconsolable, he gave up the hopeless task.

"Do let us go directly to Lord Somertown's," said his lordship to Mr. Hamilton, "I want to be doing something just to keep me from hanging myself— I knew I should be ten times worse when I had the women's grief added to my own."

Mr. Hamilton, who was not a bit less at a loss what to do with himself, readily consented to the proposal: and they immediately proceeded to Hanover-Square. On ascending the steps of his Lordship's house, they found the knocker muffled; and the servant who opened the door, informed them that Lord Somertown was extremely ill, and not expected to live.

"What is his complaint?" said Lord Ellincourt.

"A violent fever and delirium," answered the servant.

"Is the Duke of Albemarle here?" said Mr. Hamilton.

"No, Sir," replied the man, "we don't know where to send to the Duke, and that distresses us very much. I believe it was a letter from his Grace that first made my Lord ill, for he was in such a fury after he had read it, that he stamped about the room like a madman, and he was seized just afterwards with the fever that has held him ever since. His lordship burnt the Duke's letter, in his passion, or else his man could have found out by that where to direct to his Grace."

"How long has his Lordship been ill?" asked Lord Ellincourt.

"Only since the day before yesterday, Sir, and he has raved incessantly ever since," said the man. "He talks of the Duke, and says he is married to an impostor; and then he wants to get out of bed to go in pursuit of his nephew, crying out that he will be drowned, for that he is gone to Ireland after a nameless girl."

Mr. Hamilton and Lord Ellincourt looked at one another.

"Could I speak a few words to Lord Somertown's confidential servant?" said the former, "I have something of great importance to communicate to his Lordship; and perhaps it would be prudent to inform his Lordship's valet of it."

The porter immediately sent to desire Lord Somertown's Gentleman to come down stairs, and Mr. Hamilton and Lord Ellincourt were shown into the library until he came to them.

Whilst they were waiting there, an elderly man, between fifty and sixty years of age, with a fat red face, and little sharp looking eyes, came into

the room; his person was short and thick set, and he wore a flaxen wig curled tight to his head; his clothes were plain, but of the best quality; and his manner ignorantly consequential.

"Sarvant, Gentlemen, your servant," bowing to each as he entered, "hope no offence;" and then, with a significant nod, he seated himself. "Nice easy chair this," continued he, looking archly, first at Lord Ellincourt, and then at Mr. Hamilton, "stuffed with eiderdown, I fancy. Wonder whether the old Lord ever found himself *easy* when *he* sat in it," winking with one eye as he spoke, "fancy not much of that. A rum old chap I believe; but suppose you know that as well as me."

"We are not acquainted with Lord Somertown," answered Mr. Hamilton.

"So much the better, no loss, can assure you; they say he is ill, fancy I gave a doser myself last time I saw him. A rum old jockey Could not swallow what was said, and yet would not part with his *mopasses* to make a body hold their tongue. Now you know, gentlemen, a man ought to be paid for holding his tongue. You take me, don't you?"

"Not quite *clearly*," answered Mr. Hamilton, who now hoped to draw something from the talkative stranger.

"Oh, don't you; well then I'll explain it. Now you must know, gentlemen, that I have got a secret that concerns Lord Somertown, and I have kept it a great many years; because why? I *could not tell* it, for he sent me to India, to have me out of the way. Well, what's the upshot? Why, I was lucky, scraped a little matter together, made the most of it, and at last made up my mind to set off for England. Well, coming home our ship was taken, and I lost a *sight* of things. Had secured my money though, by sending it before me to England. Well, what's the upshot? Why, when I gets

home, which I did at last, by being retaken by an English privateer, the first thing I did, was to enquire for Lord Somertown; for thinks I 'tis fit he should pay my loss. Well, what's the upshot? Why, when I went to explain matters in the civilest manner possible, why he falls into a great passion, called me a scoundrel, and I cannot tell you what; well then, says I, my Lord, says I, *that* for you, and then I snapped my fingers, your secret shall be known, and more than you thinks I know, and it shall go into the news papers, and into the Parliament House, and into,"—Just at this moment the door of the apartment opened, and Lord Somertown's valet came in.

He bowed respectfully to Lord Ellincourt and Mr. Hamilton, and begged to know their commands.

Before they could answer, however, the flaxen wigged gentleman stepped between them, and said, in a tone of importance, "Hope no offence, gentlemen, hope no offence; but really must speak."

"Has my Lord sent me any message? Does he come to terms? Will he down with the *mopasses*?"

"I have already told you, Mr. Fortescue, that my Lord is too ill to be spoken to," said the servant, "I beg you will wait a little longer for an answer."

"No, shan't wait another day, have great reason to think the right heir's alive; if so, will be sure to find him, warrant he will be glad enough to pay me."

"Pray, Mr. Fortescue, do not talk so strangely," interrupted the servant, "what must these gentlemen think? if my Lord was well, you would not dare to do it!"

"What," said the stranger, "would he put me in a *bag*, and send me on board a ship, ah! know his tricks, pretty well all over now. Can't do no more mischief. *Old one* fetch *him* in a bag now I suppose.

'I wish you would let these gentlemen speak, Mr. Fortescue," said the valet, "it is really a great shame you should affront them so."

"Ask pardon; hope no offence; pray speak, gentlemen; perhaps you have got a secret to tell."

"No," replied Mr. Hamilton, "we have no secret to tell; we want to find out one; and we will give a handsome reward to whoever can give us the least information upon the subject. I have lost a daughter, and I have reason to suspect she is secreted by Lord Somertown: the truth *must* soon come out, and then woe unto the delinquent. In the mean time, however, I offer pardon and a *reward* to any of the accomplices in this dark plot, that will discover it to me, so that I may recover my lost child. Five hundred pounds shall be given to whosoever shall discover where she is."

"Five hundred pounds!" repeated the talkative Mr. Fortescue; "why, five hundred pounds is very well for *telling* a secret. I asked a *thousand* pounds for *keeping* a secret; but then every body knows that to *keep* a secret is worth double what it is to tell one. So, Sir, if you please to give me your direction, will try what I can do for ye."

Mr. Hamilton put a card into his hand. The moment he glanced his eyes over it, "What, Hamilton of Pemberton Abbey?" exclaimed he.

"The *same*," answered Mr. Hamiltom.

"Well, then, will call on you in an hour, and tell you something make your hair stand an end."

"What, about my daughter!" said Mr. H.

"No, no: about somebody nearer a kin to you."

"Who *can* that be?"

"Why, yourself, to be sure," replied the oddity, laughing at what he thought his own wit.

Lord Somertown's valet appeared much agitated and distressed, during the whole of this scene; but

he persisted in saying that he knew nothing of the young lady; and adding, that he believed his attendance would be wanted with his Lord.

The gentlemen were obliged to go, without obtaining any satisfaction.

The loquacious Mr. Fortescue retired at the same time. As he turned from the door, he nodded his head, and said with a grin: "Be with you at the time; bring some intelligence of young Miss, by then, perhaps. — Well, what's the upshot? why, get five hundred pounds: half as good as *keeping a secret.*"

CHAPTER XXXV.

Development.

Before the gentlemen returned home, they called at the Duke of Albemarle's, and learnt, with concern, that his Grace was out of town, and not expected to return for some time; as his servant who had been left in London, had orders to follow him to Ireland, whither his Grace was *unexpectedly* gone.

"To what part of Ireland is the Duke gone?" asked Lord Ellincourt.

"We are not certain, Sir," answered the ser-

went: "his valet is to meet his Grace in Dublin. His Grace did not think of going to Ireland, when he left London for Pemberton-Abbey."

"For Pemberton-Abbey!" exclaimed Lord Ellincourt. "When did his Grace visit that place?"

"It is nearly a week ago, Sir," replied the man; "at least as near as I can recollect. But his Grace did not stop there at all; for on the road he met with some intelligence that obliged him to go to Ireland; and then the Duke wrote home for his valet to go to Dublin, and take the things the Duke wanted with him; and his Grace said he should meet him there shortly."

"And does Lord Somerton know where the Duke is gone?" asked Mr. Hamilton.

"Oh no, Sir," replied the man; "and the news has almost killed Lord Somerton, for I believe his Lordship thinks his Grace is gone to fight a duel."

The gentlemen thanked the servant for his intelligence, and departed towards Mr. Hamilton's house, that they might be in time for the important visitor they expected.

"This is a dark business," observed Mr. Hamilton, as they walked along. "I do not believe that Lord Somerton does not *know* where the Duke is gone. What appears the strangest to me is, that it should be owned that his Grace set out for Pemberton Abbey, since his attachment to Fanny is so well known, that it would be supposed by every body, that his visit could be intended for her alone."

"I dare say he is the very man who has run away with poor Fanny," said Lord Ellincourt; "but I will soon know the truth; for by Heavens I will set off for Ireland directly. I will just go with you, and hear what old Square-toes has got to say, and then I am off in a tangent."

"But will it be prudent," said Mr. Hamilton, "to set off for Ireland, without knowing to what part of it you must direct your footsteps?"

"Oh, I shall gain some intelligence on the road," answered his Lordship. "For I mean to go down to Pemberton-Abbey again, and endeavour to trace the fugitives from thence. Ross is gone to Ireland, too; and I still think he is in the secret. Lord Ballafyn's castle is in the north of Ireland, you know; I shall therefore cross from Port Patrick, and make immediately for Ballafyn Castle, and make that rascal Ross give me an account of the sweet girl I intrusted to his care; and if it is not a satisfactory one, I will shoot the scoundrel."

"Let me accompany your Lordship," said Mr. Hamilton. "Who can be so proper to go in search of the dear creature, as her father? Besides, I know the danger of going *alone* to Ballafyn Castle too well, to let you risk it."

"Oh, never fear *me*," answered Lord Ellincourt, "I will take servants enough with me, to defend me against an ambush; and, I really think, it will not be prudent for us both to leave town; as, however appearances may lead us to suppose Fanny has been carried to Ireland, it is still possible she may be in London, and need a protector."

"Then Mr. Barlow will be that protector," said Mr. Hamilton, "for I cannot remain inactive whilst in this state of suspense."

By this time the gentlemen had arrived at Mr. Hamilton's: they had not been long there, before Mr. Fortescue was announced.

He entered with his familiar nod: "Exact to my time, you see," said he, smiling. "Pretty used to that when I was in India. Got into a different sort of a place now. This is the land of freedom; Lord Somertown knows that pretty well. But what's the upshot? Why, when he

wants to get rid of a man, pops him off abroad: has done it more than once.

"Now, Sir, I must ask one question, before I say any thing more:—Are you old Mr. Hamilton's son, of Pemberton Abbey?"

"I am *not*, Sir," answered Mr. Hamilton emphatically, "but I am his *heir*, have you any thing to communicate respecting my deceased friend."

"Why, Sir, as to that, the person I want to find was called Mr. Hamilton's son, but was not his son: and if I could find him, I fancy I could tell him something to please him a little, but *have* heard he is dead, so hope no offence, there's no harm done, if you a'n't he, the story is nothing to you."

"I *am* he," interrupted Mr. Hamilton, "be explicit, therefore, and do not keep me in suspense."

"Thought as much as soon as I glimpsed you, same turn of face, little older to be sure, but what's the upshot? If people live long, must grow old—a little older myself."

"Well, again," interrupted Mr. Hamilton, "whither does this tend, Sir? I am not in a mood to be trifled with."

"Why, then, you shall not be trifled with," answered the oddity, (winking aside at Lord Ellincourt,) "a little rumbustical or so, something like curry powder; but I see you are going to fly out again. Well then, must make haste and tell you that I have got documents in my possession, that will prove your right to the Albemarle title and estate, and if you are willing to come down with the *mopasses*, we'll set the lawyers to work directly, and make old Somertown hang himself; but there must be some *mopasses*, you understand me, can't tell a secret without *mopasses*."

"How came you by these documents, Sir?" asked Mr. Hamilton. "Very honestly, I can as-

sure you, come to me like a legacy. My father was clerk of the parish, where your father and mother were married, and to please the late Lord Somertown, and for a few *mopasses* (winking) he tore the leaf out of the register, and got out of the way when the marriage was tried to be proved. A very keen old man—understood *trap* as well as any body—lived to be ninety-five—died only a few weeks ago—sent for me into Scotland, as soon as he heard I had returned to England—said, he had got something to leave me; so off I set, thought there were some *mopasses*, very few of them, though for this, Lord Somertown had behaved shabby to him, and neglected to pay him his annuity, when he thought there was no danger of a claim to the estate."

"Well, father was resolved to be upside with him, so sent for me. 'Tom,' says he, giving me a tin box, 'there's something to make your fortune in that box, and then he told me that it contained the register he had torn out of the book.

"Lord Somertown sent to me a few days ago, said he, to smooth me up a bit, and bid me keep close, for he heard that the man who could claim the estate, and was supposed dead, was alive; and therefore it was necessary to caution me not to answer any questions, if I should be found. I promised I would not, but I have not forgot his ill-treatment of me, when he thought I was not wanted, and so, Tom, I was glad to find you were come back, for now you can sell the secret well to one side or t'other. The leaf of the book will be known to be the real one, when it comes to be compared with those that follow it; for the hand writing and the dates will agree, and to make it firmer, I will make affidavit to the hand-writing being that of the vicar of the parish, at the time the marriage was solemnized.'

"And so he did before a magistrate, and have

got it snug, and you shall have it for a few *mopasses.*" "If I should be so happy as to find my daughter again," said Mr. Hamilton, "I might be tempted to assert my right to that estate, but honors and riches are mere drugs to the unhappy. Besides, whilst my own marriage cannot be proved with Lady Emily, my child cannot inherit, and Lord Somertown has taken care to prevent that, by sending the only surviving witness out of England." "Know it very well, nobody better, *I am the man,* sent me to India, gave me a good birth, plenty of *mopasses,* kept me there these eighteen years, placed me where I could not get off; the only one in the secret died at last, and than off came I, but lost my *mopasses* coming home; well, what's the upshot; why, went to Lord Somertown's for more. Flew in a great passion, called me a scoundrel: told him he had better be quiet; so he ordered the servants to kick me out, but they knew better. He did not know I was son to the man he was keeping in Scotland, because he never heard my right name, but I wrote it in the book at church."

"I remember," said Mr. Hamilton, "that the witness to my marriage, who was one of the gardeners at my reputed father's, and who acted as parish clerk, was named Thomas Halford, and I have sought him without ever being able to trace him."

"Yes, that's my name," answered the man, "that's my name, but I was always called Fortescue to Lord Somertown, because I did not want him to know I was the son of the man his father had pensioned. Well, what do you think of me now?"

"Why, I think," answered Mr. Hamilton "that you have acted a rogue's part, in becoming the tool of such a villain as Lord Somertown; and that whilst I pay you to do me the tardy justice you offer, I shall despise you for your baseness.

Yet should my daughter be restored to me, I will accept your offer, and pay you your demand; but if, on the contrary, she has fallen a victim to that worst of wretches, I renounce the world,

> "Its pomps, its pleasures, and
> "Its nonsense all!"

"Never fear about your daughter," answered Mr. Fortescue, "she is run off with the Duke of Albemarle; heard it myself; heard old Somertown cursing and swearing about it. The Duke sent him a letter, and I was in the next room waiting to speak to him, so put my ear to the door, when the old man began to splutter, and heard him say his hopes were for ever blasted, and that his nephew would marry that beggar; that girl, who was born to be his torment; and now, too, he had found out she was the offspring of the detested Hamilton. So you see I am the man for discoveries."

"I think so," said Mr. Hamilton, "and now, indeed, your discovery is worth something. Ellincourt, let us not lose a moment. I will ring and order horses."

"So do," replied his Lordship; "but remember I have a wife and mother to take care of, so I will return home, and you can call for me."

"So I will," said Mr. Hamilton, "and within an hour too."

Lord Ellincourt now departed; and Mr. Hamilton ordered his servant to get post horses immediately. Then turning to Mr. Fortescue, "If you will leave your address with me, Sir," said he, "I will write to you as soon as I return, and inform you of my determination. In the mean time I hope you don't intend to tamper with Lord Somertown."

"No, no," answered the old man. "Know

better how to make bargains; understand trap: but shall look about me, and try to pick up what news I can." Then taking a card from his pocket, he gave it to Mr, Hamilton, and departed.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

The haunted Rock

We must now return to poor Fanny, whom we left at Ballafyn Castle, just awaking to the renewal of all her terrors.

Rose, the young girl who had warmed Fanny's bed on the preceding night, came into the room the next morning, the instant she heard her moving about, and asked her if she wanted any thing. Fanny thanked her, but replied in the negative."

"I hope, ma'am," said the girl curtesying, "that you will let me stay and help to dress you, for I am afraid you feel very *lonely* in this strange place."

"Indeed I do," said Fanny, bursting into tears, "but I fear my sorrow is hopeless."

"Oh no, Miss, you need not be uneasy, for my Lord will be down to-night or to-morrow, and

then I am sure he will do every thing to make you comfortable."

"Why should you imagine so?" said Fanny, "Lord Ballafyn does not know me."

"Indeed Miss, I have heard," said the girl, "that my Lord is going to marry you; that is what the servants all say; and to be sure if he did not know you, he would not think of that."

"It must be a mistake," said Fanny, "altogether: for, I assure you, I never saw Lord Ballafyn in my life-time."

"Well, Miss, to be sure you must know best; but that's what is said." She then asked Fanny whether she would chuse to breakfast below, or in her own apartment.

"Here, if you please," said Fanny, "for my spirits are too weak to bear the thoughts of moving from this spot."

As soon as Fanny was dressed, Rose left her to fetch the breakfast, and when she was gone, Fanny had leisure to examine her apartment. It was a spacious room, with the bed standing in an alcove, and on each side of it were two modern sash windows, that looked into a beautiful park, where great quantities of deer were seen grazing; and the beautiful prospect it afforded would, in any other circumstances, have delighted Fanny, but now her desponding heart made her eye rest upon it with melancholy indifference. At the other end of the apartment was a large closet, which was formed in one of the turrets of the castle, and still retained its antique form. A long narrow window, in the shape of a loop-hole, with a casement of glass, gave light to the apartment, and from it Fanny discovered the top of a lower tower, that appeared almost within reach of the window. Her eye measured the distance with anxiety, whilst a thought of escape, more to be wished than hoped for, vaguely crossed her imagi-

nation; yet, supposing she were able to elude the vigilance of her guards, and quit the castle, whither could she return her fugitive steps? or from whom hope to receive that protection she stood so much in need of?

When breakfast was over, Fanny said she would take a walk into the park into which her windows looked; but Rose told her with a respectful curtsey, that she hoped she would not be offended at what she was going to say, but she had received orders from the old woman, who was her aunt, not to lose sight of her; and, therefore, if she chose a walk, she must suffer her to accompany her."

"I *am a prisoner* then?" said Fanny, tears starting into her eyes.

"No Miss, not a *prisoner*," said Rose, "only my Lord has given such a strict charge about taking *care* of you, that my aunt is afraid of letting you wander about alone, in this wild place, where you are quite a stranger, for fear you should lose yourself."

"Your aunt is very considerate," said Fanny, "but the restraint is of no consequence to me, for I have no means of escaping were I at liberty to wander wherever I pleased; I will therefore take the walk in your company, or remain within doors, which you like best."

"Dear heart, Miss," said Rose, "you are very condescending and good, but I am sure my aunt would not wish you to be deprived of a walk, and so I will go and mention your wishes to her."—And away she ran, and presently returned with her bonnet on, and her aunt's respects, and begged Miss would walk where she liked, provided Rose accompanied her.

They now strolled into the park, and Fanny had a full view of the immense edifice, called Ballafyn Castle. There was something grand and striking in its appearance, at least where it had

not been modernized; but wherever such windows had been introduced, although they gave cheerfulness to the apartments, they destroyed the solemn grandeur of antiquity; and spoiled the effect upon the imagination.

"This seems to be a very old place," said Fanny, addressing Rose, "do you know how long it has been built?"

"Oh lauk, no, Miss, but I dare say these many hundred years. I wonder my Lord don't pull it down, and build a pretty new fashioned house in the place of it, for this is good for nothing but to harbour a pack of ghosts, and the like of that."

"Of ghosts!" interrupted Fanny, "do they say that ghosts haunt the castle?"

"Oh yes, Miss," answered Rose, "that they certainly do, and not only the castle, but that great rock that you see straight on before you there, towards the sea. The late Lady Ballafyn walks there all in white every moonlight night, as I have been told: but I can't say I ever saw her, for I have always taken good care not to look, for it would frighten me to death, I am sure, if I was to see a ghost; but the gardener says he has seen her many a time; and old Matthew says he has seen her; and there was a beautiful young man that came here to court my lady, I believe, and some people say my Lord killed him in a fit of jealousy, and his ghost was seen upon the rock; and they say he walks the castle now, with a taper in his hand, and a long sabre."

"You deal in shocking stories," said Fanny. "Do you remember the late Lady Ballafyn."

"Oh dear no, Miss; she was dead before I came to Ireland."

"You are not a native of Ireland then?" said Fanny.

"No Miss," answered the girl, "my aunt and I came from England soon after Lady Ballafyn's

death, Lord Ballafyn turned away all his servants that lived with him before that time, and had new ones from England, I was very young then, but as I had no friends but my aunt, she would not come here, without she had the privilege of bringing me with her, and so I have lived here ever since."

"But your aunt said, I resembled Lady Ballafyn," said Fanny, "how could she know that, if she never saw her ladyship?"

"Oh! my aunt lived at Lord Somertown's," answered Rose, "before Lady Ballafyn was married, and so she knew her very well." Fanny listened to this information with dismay, for it too plainly told her that she was in the hands of Lord Somertown's creatures, and feared but too justly, that some suspicion of her birth had given cause to her present imprisonment.

They walked on towards the haunted rock, and Rose was so taken up by the discourse she was holding, that she was unconscious whither she was going, until she found herself close to the tremendous spot.

"Oh lauk! Miss, screamed she, turning hastily back, "I declare we are close to that frightful haunted place, let us make haste away, for fear we should see any thing."

"But ghosts only appear at night," said Fanny, smiling, "what cause, therefore, can there be for your alarm at this hour of the day?"

"Oh lauk, Miss," they say *Irish* ghosts walk in the day-time, and then they are called *Fetches*; and if this should be one, what will become of us, if it should jump out upon us?"

"Never fear," said Fanny, "I will not require you to go any farther, sit still upon this stone, and let me climb the rock alone, I am sure the prospect from the top must be very beautiful, and I long to try whether my conjecture is right."

Rose expostulated with Fanny on her imprudence, and endeavoured to dissuade her from exploring the dangerous rock, but finding her persuasions vain, she yielded at length to her intreaties, and seating herself upon the stone Fanny had pointed out, consented to wait for her return from what *she* termed her dangerous excursion.

The rock was of considerable magnitude, and lofty craigs rose majestically from the solid mass that composed the base, and seemed to emulate the sky, for the clouds often rested on their summits, long after the god of day had driven them from the lower world. The ascent to this romantic promontory was made easy by a sort of natural staircase,which wound round the basement of the rock, and Fanny had soon the satisfaction of finding herself on a point so elevated, that she could see the winding coast for a considerable length of way, and on the distant waves, where the arm of the sea, that watered the shores, joined the parent ocean, she could distinguish vessels passing, their white sails glistening in the sun beam. On the other hand, a wild country with a few scattered cabins, presented a striking contrast to the richly wooded and well cultivated demesnes that skirted Ballafyn Castle, and bespoke the riches of its owner. As Fanny gazed at the dark battlements of that proud edifice, she heaved a sigh to the memory of her mother.

" Strange and unsearchable," said she aloud, " are the decrees of heaven, and frail mortals can only bow the head, and suffer beneath, the correcting hand of unerring wisdom. In that castle did my sainted mother breath her last sigh, and sink the victim of tyranny and oppression : and although bred an alien to every tender tie, and equally a stranger to those who would have loved, and those who would have persecuted her, the hapless offspring of that martyred saint is now

brought by force to the same spot where her mother suffered, to fall, perhaps, by the same cruelty!"

As Fanny spoke, she clasped her hands together, whilst tears of anguish chased each other down her cheek—"On this rock," continued she, looking around her, "the spirit of my mother is said to walk; Oh, would to heaven that I might be permitted to behold it! Dear murdered saint! in pity listen to thy daughter's sighs; and if thou art still conscious of what is passing in this mortal vale, oh! deign to show thyself to her!"

The enthusiasm that had seized Fanny's mind, as fancy suggested the possibility of beholding the spirit of her mother, seemed to change her timid nature, and fortify her soul to meet the awful visitation she was wishing for, she cast her eyes around with an intrepid look, and seemed almost to believe that the being she apostrophised would really appear before her. No object of that description, however, met her view, and the hollow echoes of the caverns beneath her, alone answered to her voice.

The expanse of ocean—the blue ethereal vault of heaven—the grandeur of the surrounding scenery—her lonely unprotected and perilous situation, all combined to rise her soul to devotion's highest ecstacy. "That hand," said she, "which shielded me through the difficulties attending my helpless and unprotected infancy, was my stay and support as I advanced towards womanhood, will still aid—will still protect me." Oh disbelieving infidel, you, who boast of high intellectual powers, whose days are spent in contemning and ridiculing the laws of your Maker, how despicable do you appear when compared with the Christian in the hour of adversity. Few minds were more free from the influence of superstition than that of Fanny's, and at any other time or

place her better judgment would reject the idea of the appearance of supernatural beings. But the discourse of Rose, the love which she bore to the memory of her persecuted mother, and her own wishes, made her in despite of reason more than cherish the idea. She now, heedless of the vicinity of Rose, began to apostrophise her mother in a louder strain, but was awakened from her delightful reverie, at last, by the loud vociferation of Rose, who, terrified at Fanny's long stay, had advanced nearer the rock, and catching the sound of the words uttered by Fanny, concluded she was conversing with some of the dreadful inhabitants of that awe-inspiring spot.

"Oh, Miss, for heaven's sake, come to me," cried the girl, "or I shall certainly die with terror!"—Fanny suddenly starting from her day-dream which encouraged erroneous but fondly cherished thoughts—thoughts that her reason, now resuming the empire over her mind, struggled hard to expel, and which her gentle bosom was but too well disposed again to adopt; however, she immediately descended the rock, and hastened to relieve the ill-founded fears of the frightened domestic. Rose was trembling like an aspin leaf when Fanny reached her; and it was with difficulty she persuaded her, that she had not seen nor conversed with any thing supernatural during her stay upon the haunted rock. By degrees, however, she was reconciled to the idea that had at first alarmed her, and was even brought at last, by Fanny's earnest entreaties, to promise that, if the next day was fine, she should again visit the scene that appeared to interest her so much. Their excursion was extended no farther, and Fanny, absorbed in thought, left her companion the delightful pleasure of speaking as much and upon whatever subject she pleased without contradiction, or breaking the thread of her narratives so as to give

Rose a high idea of her condescension, and good nature. When they returned to the Castle, Fanny was shewn into the stately apartments she had occupied on her arrival the night before; but she entreated that she might be allowed to remain in her chamber, for she dreaded the idea of Lord Ballafyn's expected arrival, and thought, if she did not quit the precincts of her bed-room, she should at least have notice when he came, and not be liable to meet him unexpectedly.

The old woman indulged her in her request, and her meals were served to her in her chamber. The window of her closet was the favourite scene of her contemplation, for from thence she could see the distant rock, and she watched there after night fall, in spite of the remonstrances of Rose, in hopes of seeing the apparition.

The moon rose in full splendor about midnight, and reflected her brightness on the craggy summit of the rock, as well as on the undulating bosom of the restless ocean, whose waves dashed the adjacent shore. Fanny gazed for a length of time without seeing any object like the one she sought for, and she was retiring from the window to seek her pillow, when her attention was arrested by a sight that filled her bosom with an awe unfelt before that momentous period.

A tall slender figure seemed to rise suddenly from one of the projections of the mysterious rock, and standing on its summit spread out its arms towards the sea. The moon shone full upon the figure, and rendered it so distinctly visible, that Fanny could perceive the dark folds of the loose robe that enveloped it, waving occasionally to the breeze.

For awhile it seemed absorbed in contemplating the mighty waters. Then starting suddenly, as if called by some superior power, it dropped upon its knees, and raising its clasped hands to Heaven,

it appeared preferring some earnest petition to the throne of mercy. Fanny's feelings were worked up to such a pitch of enthusiastic awe, whilst gazing at this strange phenomenon, that she could not have uttered a syllable, or moved from the spot, to purchase even liberty itself. Whilst she was thus lost in silent wonder, the cause of it suddenly disappeared; and although Fanny's eyes were fixed upon the figure at the moment it vanished, she was unable even to conjecture how or whither it had departed. She stood for nearly half an hour afterwards rivetted to the spot, but the vision came no more, and Rose having several times entreated her to retire to her rest, Fanny was obliged to comply.

Not a syllable did she utter to Rose of the apparition she had seen, for she well knew it would for ever interdict her from walking to the rock; which place she now felt more than ever interested in exploring; for so entirely was her mind engrossed by the desire of seeing her mother, that fear was entirely forgotten, and she felt as if she could meet the whole world of spirits, provided that beatified being were amongst them.

The next day, directly after breakfast, Fanny renewed her walk to the rock, and Rose accompanied her; the latter was now provided with a book to amuse her whilst Fanny went upon her adventurous expedition. As soon as she had left Rose seated on the stone, and engaged with her book, Fanny mounted the rock, and bent her footsteps to the very spot, as nearly as she could judge, where she had seen the figure the preceding night. All was silence and desolation, however, and she was just about to return to Rose, whose patience she was afraid of trying too severely, when she thought she heard a slight noise behind her, and turning round her head, she beheld through a fissure in the rock; the very figure that had so

powerfully affected her mind the preceding night.

The form was that of a woman, and although clad in a loose robe, that seemed calculated rather to hide than display its symmetry, it was impossible not to perceive the grace that adorned its every movement. The veil that covered her head was thrown back, and displayed a face, in which the traces of sorrow had anticipated the ravages of time, and robbed it of its beauty before age authorised the theft; yet still a sweetness of expression remained more interesting than beauty itself, and although the fire of her eyes had been quenched with weeping, their languid beams were capable of penetrating the heart, exercising it to affection.

Fanny stood entranced as she gazed upon the awful vision, and scarcely daring to breathe, she waited in silent expectation of its speaking to her, She was however disappointed, for after looking some time with mournful earnestness in her face, the figure uttered a deep sigh, and waving her hand, as if forbidding Fanny to follow her, instantly disappeared.

After a considerable time had elapsed, and no sign of its returning, Fanny was obliged to leave the rock, and return with Rose to the Castle. The impression her mind had received by the wonderful sight she had seen, kept Fanny silent as she walked with Rose in her return; but when she had reached the Castle, all her thoughts were put to flight, by the news that awaited her there. Lord Ballafyn was arrived, and had been enquiring for her, and Mrs. Owen, the old housekeeper, was waiting to conduct her to his lordship, as soon as she came in.

At first Fanny refused to go with her, but on Mrs. Owen's saying that she was sure Lord Ballafyn would visit her in her bed-room, if she did not obey his summons, she was obliged to submit, and

was accordingly conducted to the drawing room. She entered with evident reluctance, which Lord Ballafyn perceiving, arose to meet her, and taking her hand, said,—" You are welcome to Ireland, my pretty lass—upon my honour you are a devilish handsome wench; pray how long have you been in keeping with my brother? Terror had hitherto tied Fanny's tongue, but indignation now burst the bonds of silence.

" Unhand me, my lord," said she, making a violent effort to free herself from his grasp, " nor you, nor your base brother have any right to detain me a prisoner here, and friendless as you may think me, you may find to your cost that I shall be claimed, and powerfully too, by those who will neither want the inclination nor the means to punish the violence that has been done to me."

" Well said, my pretty little actress," said Lord Ballafyn, placing his back against the door to prevent Fanny from escaping at it, as she saw he was meditating to do; " upon my honour I admire my brother's taste so much, that I have half a mind to steal you from him; but perhaps you would not like the exchange, for Ross is some years younger than I am—what, I suppose he sent you away for fear jealous *Eleanor* should find out fair *Rosamond's* bower. Come now, don't pout so, my pretty prisoner, for I will not let you pass until you have paid toll.

Fanny was almost ready to die with terror, and sinking into a chair, she sat fanning herself with her handkerchief, to keep herself from fainting.

" I cannot think," said Lord B. " where I have seen your face before: your features are quite familiar to me."

As he was speaking Fanny lifted up her eyes to his face, and instantly recollected his countenance: it was that of the man who had insulted her in Hyde Park, when Mr. Hamilton released her from

the persecution; and the remembrance of his former brutality added terror to the thought of being so entirely in his power.

"Upon my soul," said his lordship, staring rudely in Fanny's face, "I like that little vixen look of your's so well, and the air of modesty you counterfeit becomes you so much, that if you will leave Ross, and consent to live with me, I will settle a vast deal more upon you than it is in his power to do: and then if you behave well, and wheedle me prettily, who knows but you may persuade me to marry you; and that you know is what you can have no chance of with Ross. Come, I see the storm that is gathering, and I hate female hurricanes, so I will let you go to your own chamber, and you shall have four-and-twenty hours to consider of the proposal. Ross will be here in two days, so if you agree to my offer, it must be settled before he comes, and you and I must slip off until the breeze is blown over. Come, I will have a kiss, and then you shall go."

So saying, he clasped the terrified Fanny in his arms, and almost smothered her with kisses.

Bursting from his grasp, by an effort of supernatural strength, which terror supplied her with, she escaped from further persecution, and flying to her chamber, locked herself in; then sinking on a chair, a flood of tears came to her relief, and saved her from fainting. Here she commended herself to Him, who was alone able to defeat the intentions of the wicked men into whose power she had unhappily fallen; her determination neither to be intimidated by threats, nor moved by entreaties to unlock the door became fixed, and was the only preventative which she could provide for the preservation of her honour. It was in vain that Rose, and Mrs. Owen alternately applied for admittance at her door, she resolutely refused to admit them nor would she take any of the food

they brought her, because she must have opened the door to receive it,

The state of mind in which the poor girl passed that day, would be difficult to describe. Let the fair reader for a moment contemplate this interesting female, removed from that circle in which she was cherished, and beloved, torn by ruffian hands from those she held dear, and that at a time when fortune seemed to smile propitiously upon her—at a time when her little bark, which so long buffeted the tempestuous seas of life was to all appearance entering the haven of happiness—see her at such a period, placed in the hands of an unprincipled and powerful man, and surely the tear of sensibility will not be withheld; and when the darkness of night surrounded her, and she found herself without light, she could have almost compromised her other fears to have obtained a candle, but she was now left to herself, for nobody came near her, and as she was afraid to go to bed she opened her closet window, and stood watching the distant rock as the moon rose over the romantic landscape.

The autumn was far advanced, and the breeze of night so chilling, that Fanny was obliged to retire from the open window, as she was shivering with cold.

As she turned to go out of the closet into her own room, a slight rap on the window made her start. It was again repeated, and her eye plainly perceived something white in the form of a letter, close to the casement.

Poor Fanny's heart beat quick, as she watched the strange appearance, but she summoned courage enough to go to the window and open it. A piece of paper, fastened to the end of a stick, presented itself before her, which she took with a trembling hand; but, alas! the moon-light was not sufficiently bright, at that moment, to enable her to

decypher its contents; and the curiosity this occurrence had awakened, made her hardy enough to look out of the casement, to try whether she could discover the person who had presented it to her.

On the top of the turret, beneath her window, she could plainly perceive a man standing, with his eyes raised to her apartment. His appearance was so rough and forbidding, and the tattered garments that clothed his athletic form, bespoke him of the lowest order of people.

"What are the contents of this note, friend?" said Fanny, in a low voice, leaning as far out of the window as she could reach; "do you know what it contains?"

Take it to the candle, honey," said the man, "you will see, in a jiffy, that it is from your own sweetheart, that is comed all the way from England to fetch you."

"I have not a candle," said Fanny, distressed beyond measure that she had none.

"Well, never mind, honey," replied the man, "you can go *wid* me first, and read the note afterwards."

"Go with you!" exclaimed Fanny, "How can I go with *you*?"

"Oh the *asyest* thing in the world, jewel. Just lend me your hand a wee bit, and then I'll lift you down on this here place in a jiffy, and then leave the rest to me. I have got a ladder below, that will set you down on the ground as *asy* as a bird flies."

"But I don't *know* you," said Fanny

"Och, and that don't signify at all at all; for if *you* don't know me, there's plenty that *do*, and they'll tell you there's not a honester fellow in the province of Ulster, then Dermot Macfarline; so never mind about not knowing me."

"What, are you the man that brought me from

the sea side here," asked Fanny, "on that wretched carriage?"

"Sure and I am," replied the honest Hibernian, "and I have been watching about the place, to and fro, ever since; for my wife said she should never sleep again, if any bad luck happened to you." And so I met the young man that's a looking for you, and a tight young fellow he is as ever walked on shoe leather, and dearly, dearly, he loves you, that's most sure. But come along, honey, he is waiting yonder for you, and he'll be *bothering* me for staying so long."

"But who is he?" said Fanny, "for you know I cannot read the note."

"Och, and I never heard the like before: not to know your own sweetheart, without asking his name. Well, to be sure, and its myself that never put the question to him, for I thought you must know your own sweetheart: so you would if you could read the bit of a letter he has sent you."

"I will read it to-morrow morning," said Fanny, "as soon as it is light."

"Indeed, and that will be too late," said Dermot. "So, if you don't choose to read it till to-morrow morning, *plase* to give it back to me, and I'll take it to the poor youth that sent it; for there's nothing so foolish as reading a letter when it is too late to do what it bids you."

Fanny stood at the window, in the utmost distress, with the letter in her hand. Her fears of Ballafyn would have induced her to fly with any protector that seemed to promise an honourable asylum. But this appeared so strange an application, and the person employed, so uncouth a being, that she could not help fearing that she might fall into some dreadful snare, by listening to the invitation. At length, however, to her unspeakable joy, the moon immerged from the clouds that had shaded her brightness for the last half hour, and

she was enabled to read the following words, on the note she held in her hand:—

"Condescend, most lovely of women, to accept the protection of one who would die to shelter you from danger. The most imminent now threatens your life. Your honour is not safe a single moment, whilst you remain beneath the roof of the most abandoned of men. I have followed you from England, with a determination to rescue your innocence from the grasp of an oppressor, and have been guided, by the hand of Heaven, to the mansion that contains you. I cannot tell you the particulars now, for time presses; and, if you escape not to-night, to-morrow will be too late. Fear not to trust the honest creature that is the bearer of this; he would lay down his life to serve you; you befriended his family; and gratitude once awakened in the bosom of an Irishman, is never after extinguished. Oh, hesitate not an instant, but hasten to the asylum prepared for you by your faithful

"ALBEMARLE."

Fanny put the note in her bosom, and, leaning forward, asked Dermot, "how she could get out of the window?"

"Och, if you are coming, honey," said he, clapping his hands together for joy, "I'll fetch you the little ladder in a jiffy;" and, as he spoke, he disappeared, and returned, in a few minutes, with a little hand-ladder, which he placed against the window; and Fanny, having pushed her slender form through its narrow opening, was able to descend to her rough protector, with all the ease imaginable. He begged her to close the casement; "and then, honey," said he, "they will think that you have fled away up the chimney, or that the *banshee* has taken you away through the key-hole."

Fanny trembled so, as she descended from the lower tower, that she had nearly slipped from Der-

mot's hold. "By the powers," said he, "but you frightened me so, that I sha'nt be myself again for these two hours. A pretty story I should have had to tell now, if you had broke your neck down that bit of a pent-house there; and a fine botheration the young spark would have made at me for cheating him of his sweetheart"

"Pray do not talk in that style," said Fanny, trembling, "I have no sweetheart, as you call it."

"Indeed and indeed but you have," answered Dermot, "and so you'd say yourself, if you had but heard all the poor young man had said about you. I am sure he *sot* down in our cabin, and talked about you a whole hour, till he made Judy, and the children, and myself, cry."

"What could he be saying of me all that time?" said Fanny, astonished that the Duke should have been so imprudent.

"Och! and he did not say much, honey, for *I* was the chief talker; for when I described your journey to Ballafyn Castle, and the piteous look you cast at your persecutors, he was just like one beside himself, and he wiped his eyes, and made me tell the story over and over again.

"Then he wanted me to direct him where and how he could get to speak to you; but I told him it was as much as his life was worth, and your's too, if he should attempt to get into the house; and then I told him the story about poor Lady Ballafyn, and the gentleman that came and tried to see her, and how I knew he was sent off, nobody could tell where.

"And when I let him into the secret about the poor lady's escaping from that spalpeen of a lord of hers, and told him who got her off—Och! it was *I* was the clever fellow *wid* him directly: but come, Miss, let us make haste, for we are not safe whilst we are in reach of the devils that live in that castle."

Fanny now laid hold of Dermot's arm without

hesitation, and almost flew along, to keep pace with his rapid strides. She soon found that they were making towards the haunted rock.

"Whither are we going?" said she, for she felt alarmed, as she recollected that she had looked from the summit without observing one decent habitation.

"Be easy, Miss," replied Dermot, "you are going to such a safe place, that the Devil himself will not be able to find you;" and he almost dragged her towards the rock.

"Oh Heavens!" exclaimed Fanny, almost fainting with terror, "for what am I reserved?" and she dropped from Dermot's arm upon the stone, where Rose had sat, when she accompanied her in her morning rambles.

"Miss," said Dermot, stopping at the same moment, "it is a very hard case you cannot believe a man is honest, *becase* you see he is poor. Och! and 'tis that same reason makes the English and the Irish that they can never agree; they are always bodering one another with their suspicions; look ye here, Miss, you did a kindness to my poor family, without asking, and sure I have a right to return the favour, without asking too. Fifteen years ago I saved a beautiful lady from being murdered; I was but a youngster then, but I had a stout heart, and neither minded man nor devil in a good cause. You will see that lady presently, and she will tell you that Dermot Macfarlane is worthy to be trusted.

"That rock, which now goes by the name of the haunted rock, is the private entrance to a house at nearly half a mile distance; that house is inhabited by a few nuns, who, afraid of having their retreat discovered, generally receive what necessaries they stand in need of by this road. I am the person who waits upon them, and it was I who persuaded them to receive Lady Ballafyn

amongst them, when the poor soul did not know where to fly.

"At that time I was a servant at the Castle, and I discovered what was going on, and determined to save the Lady: so her maid and I laid our heads together, and contrived to get her off one night; and it was reported she died, and glad enough my lord was, for he mortally hated her; and there was a fine funeral; but she's not dead, poor soul, she's as live as you are, only she's a little wild at times, rather cracked or so; for though she could not abide Lord Ballafyn when she lived with him, yet the nuns say, she has done nothing but talk of her poor dear husband ever since she has been there, and always insists upon it that he was murdered.

"Her maid set off for England, poor soul, soon after her lady went into the nunnery, on purpose to tell her Ladyship's friends where she was, but the poor soul was drowned in her passage, so I suppose I am the only person that knows a word of the matter.

"As to the poor Lady, she is quite melancholy like, and would not leave the nuns if it was ever so; and she walks sometimes upon the rock, but she is safe enough of being discovered, for nobody would go near her for all the world. She is called the Banshee, and avoided by every creature like the Devil's own-self."

It is impossible to describe Fanny's emotions whilst listening to this tale of wonder. She had there seen her mother! and the person whose honesty she had doubted, and whose protection she had feared, was the champion of that distressed parent! She arose immediately from the stone she was seated on, and seizing Dermot's arm—

"Let us hasten, my good friend," said she, "to the asylum you have promised me; all my doubts are at an end, and I will soon convince you that I am not your inferior in gratitude."

Dermot removing the Stone at the entrance of the Cavern.

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They soon reached the rock, and ascended its craggy sides, then, winding amidst its mazes, they came to the identical spot where the figure had disappeared from Fanny the morning before.

Near this spot Dermot lifted a loose stone that lay at his feet, and shewed his astonished companion the entrance to a spacious cavern. The light of a torch, held by a man muffled up in a large great coat, illumined the gloomy chamber, and Fanny was presently convinced, by his voice, that this was the Duke of Albemarle. "I have waited here with a degree of suspense and anxiety almost insupportable. I feared that Dermot would not succeed in persuading you to come, lovely Fanny, if he was even so happy as to obtain the power of speaking to you; but, thank God, you are come, and, I hope, now out of the reach of danger."

"I was not a bit afraid of being able to speak to Miss," said Dermot, "*becase* I *knowed* she watched at her window every night almost, and I saw her a good bit before I spoke to her, because I was afraid of *flustering* her; but, oh, by the powers, I have had a tight job to persuade her to come, for she was afraid of trusting me; poor jewel, she little thought it was impossible for her to fall into worse hands than she was in already."

"I beg your pardon for my doubts," said Fanny, "and I hope you will never have cause to complain of such ingratitude again. As to you, sir," continued she, turning towards the Duke, "language is inadequate to express what I feel for your goodness to a poor forlorn creature like me. Oh, if you knew what a wretch your timely interference has delivered me from, your generous heart would feel gratified in the conciousness of bestowing happiness."

The Duke took Fanny by the hand, but was unable to reply, and, giving the torch to Dermot,

he led the lovely object of his affections through the long dark passage that led through the caverns of the rock to the house where the friendly nuns resided.

Fanny was received by the sisterhood with the greatest kindness; they had been waiting up for her, and, observing her pale looks and faint voice, they insisted upon her taking some refreshment, which was prepared for her.

The Duke and Dermot were now obliged to retire, after commending the precious charge a thousand times to their care; the former, however, promised to return on the morrow, and inform Fanny of the means by which he had been so fortunate as to trace her footsteps, and ultimately release her from her bondage.

As soon as they were gone, Fanny enquired after the object of her constant thoughts; the lady, she had been informed, was an inmate of their hospitable mansion; at first, they seemed unwilling to admit that Lady Ballafyn was really amongst them; but, when they found that she was in full possession of the particulars, they admitted the fact.

"Oh, where is the lovely sufferer now?" said Fanny; "is she reposing? Oh, that I might behold her to-night; my heart cannot rest, until I have embraced her."

"Why does Lady Ballafyn interest you so much, my dear?" asked the superior. "It is impossible you can ever have seen her."

"Yes, I have, I am sure I have; I saw her on the rock yesterday; I took her for an inhabitant of another world. Ah, if she knew it is a daughter that languishes to embrace her, she would fly with open arms to receive me."

"A daughter!" reiterated the superior; good Heavens, "what do you mean?" But before Fanny had time to reply, the figure that she had seen

upon the rock the preceding day, rushed into the room, and folding Fanny in her arms, strained her to her bosom in a fond embrace, and then sunk lifeless on the floor.

It was some time before the efforts of the nuns could restore the poor sufferer to life, and during the time the swoon lasted, the distraction of Fanny was beyond all bounds. She thought she had killed her mother, and, had not her parent revived, it is but too probable her daughter would have expired also.

At length, however, she opened her eyes, and the first object they sought was the dear child, whose sudden appearance had so nearly closed them for ever. A thousand incoherent questions, a thousand tender endearments, were mutually exchanged; but, as neither was capable of bearing an explanation at that moment, the superior insisted upon their retiring to bed, and deferring the elucidation of the wonderful mystery until the morrow.

"Then my child shall not quit me," said Lady Ballafyn, holding Fanny's hand tight between both her's, as if she feared somebody would run away with her. "She shall occupy my pallet, and I will watch beside her pillow: sleep has been long a stranger to these eyes: but, oh, when have they awaked to joy like this!"

"Your daughter and you shall occupy my bed," said the superior, "which you know is big enough to hold you both; and then I trust, that when the first ebullitions of joy have subsided, nature will assert her rights, and sleep restore your exhausted faculties."

We will now leave the enraptured mother, and the not less delighted child, to the enjoyment of a bliss too mighty for utterance, and introduce the reader to Lady Caroline's husband.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Sir Christopher Desmond.

Sir Christopher Desmond was descended from one of the most honorable families in the sister kingdom, but, being the son of a younger brother, was early in life obliged, with little more than a good education, to enter the world, and depend for his future success on those resources which a mind naturally strong and highly cultivated might supply.

Although the many restrictions which political foresight once thought necessary to enact for the preservation of Protestant ascendancy in Ireland, could not militate against Desmond, his family having, soon after the accession of Elizabeth, embraced the doctrines of the Established Church; yet, his maternal uncle enjoying a chief command in the armies of the Austrian monarch, he determined on seeking his fortune in that clime. Few were his regrets when the last point of his native land faded from the anxious sight, and seemed to blend imperceptibly with the horizon. "I will never dishonour thee, 'Land of my sires,'" exclaimed Desmond, while the tear and blush, engendered by national enthusiasm, met, and were absorbed in each other. He left the deck to hide those feelings which are too often

the scorn and ridicule of the sordid and the heartless. On the voyage he became acquainted with a young Englishman, whose mind and disposition would, in the days of chivalry, be held up as an example worthy of imitation. To a boldness of idea and quickness of decision, was added that solidity of judgment which foreigners so justly attribute to the British nation. An enthusiastic warmth ran through his speeches, yet neither that nor the eccentricity of his manners removed the favourable impression he made even at first sight. The convulsions which disfigured the face of Continental Europe about this period had engaged, in a very great degree, his most anxious thoughts; and his ardent disposition was continually urging him to take an active part in the passing events. The voyage to Hamburgh, though short, yet, so much in unison were the souls of these youths, it proved of sufficient duration for them to form a friendship as firmly cemented as the materials of which humanity is composed had the capability of effecting.

The word farewell was equally dreaded by each of these amiable and manly youths as the mandate of eternal separation. Digby, with a generosity that did honour to his noble disposition, offered to share his fortune with his friend, that they might mix in the same scenes, enjoy the same pleasures, bear the same hardships, and receive the same rewards; or bear alike with hero-nerve the frowns of the fickle goddess. Desmond, though deeply affected by this mark of friendship, refused the princely proffer; his love of independence was too great and exalted to allow him to become the satellite of any human being. Upon his refusal, the friends, with mutual regret, and minds deeply impressed with ideas of respect towards each other, parted; Digby in quest of adventures, and our hero to commence his career as a soldier.

Desmond pursued his route towards Vienna, and arrived there as the army, which the Emperor was organizing to act in conjunction with the Russian and Prussian forces, was commencing their march for ill-fated Poland. Having presented his letters of recommendation, and waited upon his uncle, who immediately adopted him as his son, and declared him heir to all his property, his first leisure moments were devoted to friendship and affection; to his mother, whom he tenderly loved, he sent a particular account of whatever he thought worthy of her notice, which occurred since his departure from home; to Digby he directed a packet, under cover, to that gentleman's banker, at Hamburgh, in which his hopes and his views were more particularly explained. He had not been long in Vienna before he was appointed to a lieutenancy in Baron Humbolt's regiment of hussars, and, as they were ordered into actual service, he joined them immediately.

Scarce had the troops entered the Polish territories, than the left wing of the army was attacked by a considerable body of lancers, aided by an undisciplined and badly-armed peasantry. Their onset was as the rushing of a mountain-torrent; but the coolness displayed by the Austrians, in repelling this impetuous charge, made the Poles, from being the assailants, become the assailed—their lines were broken—to rally was impossible; Humbolt's regiment sustained the post of honour, and Desmond received particularly the thanks of the commander-in-chief; this flattering mark of commendation, thus publicly bestowed, served as an incitement to future acts of glory. As they advanced into the interior of the country, and actions became more frequent, his mind, naturally humane and benevolent, made him regret that he was forced, by his circumstances, to continue in a profession so replete with evil to mankind; those

ideas often employed his mind, while he viewed the rough and unprincipled soldiery, inflated with victory, plundering the houses of that God whom they themselves worshipped, and burning the humble dwellings of the miserable inhabitants. One evening, Desmond, now advanced to a captaincy, was ordered to proceed with a detachment, and attack a position held by the enemy a few miles in advance of Warsaw: this service he performed with his usual ability, and took possession of the redoubt; but the miscreant band, few of whom had any of the qualifications necessary to form a true soldier, save courage and a mechanical obedience to their officers, had set fire to a neighbouring village; actuated by motives of humanity, he immediately proceeded to the spot, in order to restrain, if possible, their brutal violence. At the farther end of the village, he observed two hussars dragging a female from a house, while others of their companions applied firebrands to the dwelling: the intention of the hussars being easily perceived, no time was to be lost. "Wretches," exclaimed he, "desist." 'Twas the voice of their commander; and, growling like the disappointed hyæna, they reluctantly resigned their devoted victim. The fire, which had now spread from habitation to habitation, and, like a beacon, marked to the philanthropist, "the unkindness of man to man," gave him a full view of the female he had saved from pollution. He saw her, and cold and phlegmatic must he be who would not admire; her form was symmetry itself, and the soul of sensibility diffusing its rays over one of the most beautiful countenances nature ever formed, rendered the timid fair one almost irresistible. She raised her hurried eyes, and, encountering his, seemed to say, "Am I safe?" The language of nature is understood by all—'tis the converse of soul with soul; and Desmond broke this expressive silence by assuring

her, in that language with which he had from his earliest infancy been used to clothe his thoughts, "that she was safe." The lady started at the sound —joy enlivened her countenance—she grasped his hand, and, pressing it to her lips, cried out in an ecstacy, "I am safe! you are an Englishman!" and fainted. After procuring for her all the assistance the place could supply, he had her conveyed to a hut, whose sequestered situation had saved it from destruction; and then proceeded to inspect the posts, and put the redoubt in the best possible state of defence, fearful, from its vicinity to Warsaw, that some sudden attack might be made before more troops could arrive.

Returning to the hut, Desmond found the fair object of his solicitude recovered from her agitation; and, as she thanked him for his protection, the gratitude which enlivened her countenance gave fresh charms to her beauty. Eager as he was to learn something of the history of this interesting female, his sense of delicacy was such, that he refrained from those intrusive questions by which impertinent curiosity generally defeats its own intentions.

However, the lady informed him, "that she was betrothed to a young Englishman, who served as a volunteer in the Polish army, and that her father had approved of the attachment, not only from a desire of conducing to her happiness, but also from the wish he had long cherished of emigrating to England: this wish he was now realizing, and the last letter she received from her dear parent, the Count Ponituski, was dated from Dantzic, on board the United States' ship Amelia, bound to Hull. It was her intention to proceed immediately to the same port, in company with a faithful domestic, to whose care her father had entrusted her. Her lover," she continued, "would shortly follow, being to be united to him

on their meeting in that kingdom." The lady was now beginning to launch forth, in describing the fairy scenes of felicity which her youthful imagination had been pourtraying to her mind, when the delightful theme was interrupted, by the sudden intrusion of an hussar, who informed Desmond that a numerous body of troops, whether friends or enemies he could not say, were observed marching towards the post. Desmond, impelled by his sense of duty, apologised to the fair narrator, and withdrew, in order to examine into the truth of the soldier's report. He found it correct, and, knowing them to be Poles, he put himself on the defence, conceiving that his post was the object which they intended to attack. The situation of the lady became next his most momentous concern.

She had given him to understand that her intention was, as soon as possible, to proceed to England, and join her father, where, upon the arrival of her lover, she conceived her earthly happiness would commence. Desmond's cousin, the Lady Augusta Dunboyne, of Fitzroy-square, London, had a heart that sympathised in the distresses of the sons and daughters of affliction, and in her hospitable mansion the expatriated child of misfortune was sure of an asylum. To this lady's notice he intended to introduce the beautiful and interesting Polish damsel. Seating himself upon a bank, he hastily wrote the following note:—

"Dear Lady Augusta,

"The best excuse I can offer for being so laconic in my epistle, is the exposed situation I am in; for, before old Time has swallowed another hour, the noise and tumult of war, and all its attending evils, will surround your cousin. You may smile when the fair messenger delivers this to you, and say, that Mars had, at last, surrendered his liberty to Venus; but in this conjecture, my dear

Augusta, you are wrong. I am still invulnerable to the shafts of his little godship; indeed, if the balls of the Poles make no more impression upon me than the arrows of Cupid, you may expect to see me before long. The lady, to whom this is to be an introductory letter to your ladyship's favor, is the daughter of a Polish grandee; and as there is nothing so erroneous, in my opinion, as to stop the loquacity of a fair female by forestalling he story, I leave the explanation to herself. This may be the last favour I can request of you. The outposts are already engaged. My respects to Dunboyne. Adieu,

"Your's, &c.

"CHRISTOPHER DESMOND."

He sent the above to the lady by his servant, giving him his purse, and an order to accompany the fair fugitive to Dantzic.

The servant and his beautiful charge had but just cleared the precincts of the post, when the attack began: the Poles, headed by a youth that seemed to place danger at defiance, displayed in this rencounter more than their wonted courage —they became irresistible—the Austrians gave way; in short, they were obliged to abandon the redoubt. Desmond, and the few that escaped the slaughter, retreated upon their main body; in the action, his lieutenant, for whom he had a high esteem, was severely wounded by the youthful leader of the assailants: his wounds becoming painful, and the enemy not demonstrating any desire of pursuit, Desmond ordered his little band to halt. Then upon nature's bed, under the green canopy of heaven, the tired warrior stretched his weary limbs. It was a glen, fertile, yet beautiful; on either side were hills covered with trees, whose luxuriance charmed and invited the weary traveller to take shelter in their umbrage, while the meridian sun

held its mid-day reign—a rivulet gently meandering through the meadows and corn-fields of this delightful valley, with the songs of the feathered tribe, sweetly broke the silence which nature seemed to have imposed upon this retired spot. Here Desmond's contemplative mind, according with the scene, began to dwell upon the evils with which war is fraught. Around me are scattered cottages uninhabited—there the luxuriant meadows are without the stately horse, or more useful ox—the fields untilled, and this terrestrial paradise wasting its capabilities—all through the detestable ambition of man. God of nature, hast thou created man to annoy his fellow-man, hast thou endowed him with reason, and bestowed superior intellect upon him, that he might the better decoy, deceive, and destroy? No, 'twould be blasphemy to harbour the idea for a moment. Thou art a God of peace, and thy peace, continued Desmond, passeth all understanding.

He was aroused from this reverie by the noise of approaching troops; they were Austrians, and, having been detached for the sole purpose of aiding him, they began to lay plans for the retaking of the post, which the commander-in-chief considered of the first importance, as it commanded one of the principal entrances into the city. The Poles, weakened by disasters, could not place their out-posts in such numbers as to give the slightest probability of their defending them with any hopes of success. The imperials moved forward, and no sooner did they appear before the redoubt than it was abandoned by the Poles. Desmond once more renewed his applications to the Austrian court, for leave to return to his native land, but, like the former ones he had made, it remained unanswered. However, although his aversion to the military life daily increased, his known courage, skill, and perseverance, pointed him out

to those in command, as a person fit to be entrusted with enterprizes of the greatest moment, and, on this account, scarce a day passed without his being actively engaged.

One day, being on a reconnoitring party, he was surprised by the besieged, wounded, and taken prisoner. As soon as he was recovered from his wounds, he obtained permission to promenade particular parts of the city, and, as he was enjoying this liberty, the veteran warrior and patriot, Kossiusko, crossed his way; all eyes were directed towards him, and, amongst the rest, Desmond's;—but what was his astonishment, when, among the officers which attended the general, he recognized Digby, the enthusiastic, the generous, Digby! their glances met—quick almost as their thoughts the friends flew towards each other—their surprise was mutual—their pleasure equal —their embrace cordial and sincere.

Digby, after having obtained for his friend an extension of his liberty, took him to his quarters.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The Fair Marian.

No sooner were they seated than Digby began to relate to his impatient and attentive friend the various adventures into which he had fallen since their separation at Hamburgh. Desmond soon found out by his narrative, that, although Digby had been fighting for the liberty of the people among whom he resided, yet he had surrendered himself a willing captive to a female, whom he described as concentrating within herself all that was attractive and charming in woman. Desmond expressing a wish to be introduced to this incomparable lady, his friend's face became suddenly overcast with the deepest marks of sorrow. "My friend," answered Digby, "there is, at present, too much mystery, for my peace of mind, over the fate of my dear Marian. When first I entered into the service of this ill-fated country, I became acquainted with a nobleman, whose high patriotic notions were so congenial to my own, that an intimacy commenced, which in time ripened into friendship.

"The consciousness that his country would be degraded from her rank as a nation, and her laws and her liberties expire under the overwhelming force of the invaders, he agreed to proceed, the first opportunity, to England, and there secure a retreat for himself and daughter, the lady to whom I have promised eternal constancy. A few weeks back, the father, in hopes of realizing

his plans, commenced his journey towards England, and the lovely Marian followed, in company with a trusty domestic; but having an uncle to whom she was much attached, and who commanded a detachment stationed about four miles in advance of this city, she visited him for the purpose of taking a last farewell: she had been but a short time in his company, when the place was attacked by a party of Austrians, and her uncle was obliged precipitately to retreat. Arriving in Warsaw that night, and waiting on me, he told the dreadful tale. Immediately I flew to all that I had the least influence with, and, full of that ardour which love gives to the human soul, I succeeded in obtaining a numerous body of friends, determined to re-take the redoubt, and rescue my loved Marian from the power of those whom I had every reason to expect were base and unprincipled. We succeeded in dislodging the enemy, and I instantly began to search for her who was dearer to me than my own existence—but the search was in vain.

"On entering a hut, which seemed to be the only one that escaped the demoniacal fury of the Austrians, my anxiety was relieved, in a great measure, by a letter which I found there directed to me. One circumstance which it contained, however, gave me pain, and does, nay, my friend, it will ever, embitter my life: the letter mentioned that her honour and her existence had been saved by the interposition of the officer who commanded, and that that officer was an Englishman; adding, that he had sent his servant to escort her to Dantzic. When we attacked the place, (continued Digby,) mad with the thought of my Marian being exposed to the brutal ferocity of the soldiery, I, with an avidity almost inconceivable even to myself, fell upon my foes indiscriminately—my example was followed by those under my com

mand; I wounded, and, I think, severely, the young man who acted so honorably by my Marian. Shocked at the ungrateful return that war makes, I am determined to relinquish the sword; and, if ever again I should draw it in anger, it must be in defence of Old England."

Desmond had now the elucidation of the young lady's history, and relieved Digby from his uneasiness, by relating what he knew of her.

The gratitude of Digby was excessive, when he learned that it was his friend who saved his Marian. Desmond informing him of the determination he had formed of returning to his native land, Digby agreed to accompany him; nor was it long before a circumstance occurred which enabled them to proceed on their journey. By the arrival of an Austrian flag of truce, several letters were brought to the prisoners; among which there were two for Desmond; one from home, directed to him as Sir Christopher Desmond, the contents of which were, that Sir Hugh Desmond had died without children, and he being the next heir, the family title and estate devolved, of course, on him; the other was from the Austrian Cabinet, with liberty for him to retire; and, that they might mark the high sense they entertained of his services, it was accompanied by the cross of Maria Theresa.

Desmond, now as independent as pecuniary concerns could make him, set off in company with Digby, and, embarking at Dantzic, proceeded with a fair wind on their voyage. They had not been many days on the ocean, when a lady of the name of Watkins, whose husband was American Consul for some time at Dantzic, and who, for commercial reasons, had removed to England, was playing with her sweet smiling little cherub on the deck, the vessel suddenly heaved, and the dear innocent was precipitated into the ocean. Digby,

who was near the spot, apparently lost in thought, perceived the perilous situation of the child, casting a glance at the distracted mother, plunged into the deep, and, as if fortune favored his undertaking, he seized the little innocent with one hand, and keeping himself buoyant with the other, he held the poor baby up to the view of the agonized mother: a boat, which a vessel at no great distance was sending to the brig on board of which Digby had taken his passage, took him and the child in, and was proceeding with them to the vessel, when the convoy made the signal of an enemy in sight: this induced the men in the boat to return to their own ship, in spite of all the remonstrances of Digby.

The perturbation of the distressed parent had just subsided, and though she longed to embrace her little one, yet the consolation of knowing it was safe gave her relief; her frequent swoons had subsided, and that noble eloquence which nature teaches us in the hour of distress was poured forth in prayers to the God of mercy, calling upon him to bless the kind preserver of her boy. But how are our prospects blighted, our hopes dissolved, and our anticipations worse than folly! Unlooked for circumstances—events trivial in themselves, give a bias, perhaps, to our lives, as unexpected as momentous. The mother, fondly looking towards the vessel where maternal love and gratitude now centered her ideas, offered any sum to the captain if he would put her on board the other vessel, or have the child and his preserver conveyed on board his own. The honest tar, with tears in his eyes, refused the request. He had valuables to a considerable amount entrusted to his care, and, as they were safe, he advised her to rest contented, and that, as soon as they were clear of the enemy, he would immediately have them conveyed on board.

The French vessels now hove in sight, and the vessel to which Digby was taken, being a heavy sailer, was captured. The mother again became disconsolate; and Desmond, knowing the sanguine disposition of his friend, felt a deep regret at his fate. The French vessels soon gave up the chase, and, tacking about, made the best of their way to France, but not before the captain of the privateer put the child on board an American merchantman, that was proceeding with the English traders. Digby seized this opportunity to convey a letter to his friend Desmond, in which he expressed his happiness at being instrumental in the preservation of the dear little boy, and that the pleasure he experienced from the transaction more than compensated for the attending evils. He conjured him, by every tie of friendship, to seek out his Marian and her father, and be a protector to them until he could relieve him from the office. Mrs. Watkins' happiness was at its height, when she clasped her infant to her bosom; yet sorrow might be seen sweetly blending itself on the expressive countenance of the enraptured mother; he that saved her child had lost his liberty—perhaps a domestic circle anxiously awaited his arrival, or a dear partner, from whose embrace he had long been severed, daily looked for his return; thoughts such as these made the rapturous pleasure, which Mrs. Watkins just experienced, subside into a melancholy feeling.

We must now leave Digby for a time to his fate, while we follow Sir Christopher to England. Mrs. Watkins, on their landing, was met by her husband, and, after informing him of the transactions of the voyage, he pressed Desmond, with an eagerness that would not admit of a refusal, to make his house his home while he remained in London: this offer was accepted, and he accompanied the happy couple to their dwelling. The fate of poor Digby

cast a gloom over Desmond's countenance, particularly as his cousin, Lady Augusta Dunboyne, had, but a few days before his arrival, left town for her country-seat in Ireland. He had written to his relative for information on this subject, but it would be some time before an answer could arrive from that kingdom; that Marian had arrived in England he was well assured, as his servant, after seeing her safe on board, had brought him a letter from her, couched in words of the warmest gratitude, wherein he was informed by her of the name of the vessel, &c. This letter, from the length of time he was prisoner, and his servant not seeing him until he was nigh upon quitting Poland, he read, and gave to Digby; that the vessel in which she took her passage had arrived safe. Mr. Watkins, being a merchant, soon obtained information that set all doubts on that head perfectly at rest. To try to divert his thoughts from the melancholy channel in which they began to glide, Mr. and Mrs. Watkins strove to draw him towards the places of public amusement. A new performer having to make his appearance at Covent Garden, they agreed to go and see him pass the public ordeal. He had but just appeared on the stage, when Desmond, glancing at the countenances of those who surrounded him, in hopes of reading the performer's sentence, his eyes encountered those of Marian, which seemed doubtingly, though eagerly, to examine his features: he bowed, and, with a smile of recognition, acknowledged she was right. Without heeding the curious gaze of the audience, she flew to Desmond, and embraced him as her tutelary angel. Pleased as he was with the rencontre, yet there was with her in the box a young lady of incomparable beauty, that made the first impression which love ever engraved on his heart. Marian quitted him for a moment, and, returning, inform

ed him, that he would oblige her if he would accompany her, after the performance, to the house of her benefactress: this Desmond promised, and proceeding, at the conclusion of the piece, to fulfil his engagement, a man of foppish appearance detained him, conceiving that Desmond, by too abruptly passing him, deserved a reprimand; the altercation caused considerable delay, and when he arrived in the lobby, neither the fair Pole nor her agreeable companion could be found. Chagrined and disappointed, he sought his host and hostess, and, informing them of the untoward adventure, they advised him to attend the theatre for a few successive nights, in hopes of again meeting her: this advice he adopted, but to no manner of purpose.

One morning, before he arose, he heard an uncommon bustle in the house: this appeared the more remarkable to him, as the regularity of Mrs. Watkins' establishment was proverbial. On his entering the breakfast-parlour, he was agreeably surprised by meeting an assemblage of those mercantile gentlemen, for whom Mr. Watkins always expressed the highest respect. "This day," said the host, "is the birth-day of my little boy, and I hope, Sir Christopher, you will be happy, not only with us, but with the friend of your bosom?" At this moment a door, which led from the parlour to an adjoining room was opened, and Digby, with all the warmth of manly friendship, grasped the offered hand of Desmond. Immediately after, the Count Ponituski was presented to the company, and, upon being introduced to Desmond, he thanked him for the kindness he had done his daughter, and hoped, in the day of disasters, none of his relatives might want a defender. Mr. Watkins, striving to thank Digby for his noble conduct towards his son, was overcome by his feelings: the generous youth felt for the parent, and assured him that their ties

to each other were reciprocal; in the preserving of your son I had a pleasure, but you have bestowed upon me what is dearer than life, my liberty.

After breakfast, Digby, when Mr. Watkins retired, briefly related the circumstances of the voyage, and informed them, "That, from the military air which he had acquired among the Poles, the captain of the privateer conceived him to be an officer in the British service, and, but for that, he should have been put on board the American ship. That, after being a few days in prison, an order arrived from the French Government for his release, and passports given him for Hamburgh, together with a letter to be presented to the American Consul there. What was his astonishment, when arriving in that city, to find that it was through the influence of a Mr. Wat kins that his liberty was granted; and the letter contained a bill of credit on one of the first bankers of the place, together with a request that he would, as soon as he landed in England, call on him, and make his house his home? To this request he had acceded, and found that Mr. W. was the father of the child he saved from a watery grave. The vessel in which I had taken my passage not being ready to sail," continued Digby, "I strolled about to kill time, for my mind was too much engaged by a particular object to think of any thing else. I accidentally fell in with my respected friend, the Count Ponituski. The vessel in which he had embarked for England had been wrecked on the coast of Holland, and he was at that period striving to procure a passage over, but, for want of money, he was fearful of accomplishing his purpose. I relieved his mind on this head—the Count embarked with me, and we arrived at this hospitable mansion late last night, and had the inexpressible happiness of learning from our kind host that Ma-

rian is in the metropolis, and under the protection of a lady, who, from the appearance she made, was of exalted rank." Digby, with all the eagerness of a lover, wished immediately to set forward on the enquiry for his dear Marian, nor was the father less anxious to behold his daughter; but this was over-ruled by Desmond, and the convivial party continued together, increasing in the esteem of each other, until a late hour.

The next morning, as they were preparing to proceed on their enquiries, a letter arrived, directed to Sir Christopher Desmond: it was from Lady Augusta Dunboyne, in which she informed him, that the lady he had recommended to her protection, was fully entitled to it. Amiable in disposition, and polished in manners, she was the delight of a circle into which she had been introduced: she is, at present, continued Lady Augusta, under the protection of the Lady Ellincourt, of whose fair daughter, she cautioned her cousin. Few had a sounder judgment than Digby; and on the proposition that they should wait on Marian at Lady Ellincourt's, he objected, although he ardently wished to see her, saying, that as Desmond had already conversed with her, and as it was through him that she was placed in her present situation, it would be best for him to wait on her, and explain all the circumstances relative to himself and her father, and, when she was prepared for the interview, they would wait upon her. This plan of acting was adopted, and Sir Christopher proceeded to Lady Ellincourt's residence, where, presenting his card, he was instantly ushered into the presence of Lady E., who received him with that sweet condescension of manners, which characterizes the lady of high rank and mental endowments.

After complimenting him on the conduct he pursued in respect to Marian, she introduced him

to that lady, and to her own lovely daughter, Caroline, in whom he recognised the female whose beauty made such an impression upon him at the theatre. Desmond, when the first ebullition of Marian's gratitude subsided, informed the attentive fair one of the intimacy which subsisted between him and Digby, of their meeting at Warsaw, their departure from thence to England, the occurrences on the voyage, and, lastly, his being at present in London. The various passions which alternately illumined and depressed the expressive countenance of Marian, shewed to the observer what passed in the mind during this recital. When Desmond said that Digby was in the metropolis, her eyes sparkled with pleasure; but regret, like a passing cloud, dimmed their lustre. "O, heaven!" she exclaimed, "was but my dear father here, my happiness would be complete." "Your happiness is complete—he is in London, and with Digby." "O, harbinger of good—messenger of glad tidings, thou hast realised my fondest hope—let me fly to the dear, fond, the wished-for, kind, paternal, embrace." Lady Ellincourt participated in her feelings, and, ordering her coach, proceeded with Desmond and Marian to Mr. Watkins's. To describe the interview between the father and the daughter—the lover and beloved, would be impossible. A performer may interest, by personifying the passions, but it is only for the moment; for the knowledge of a want of reality dispels the fiction: this scene was nature, it spoke in a language which reached the heart, and impressed itself upon the feelings so firmly, that the powers of time were not adequate to its removal. The party rose high in Lady Ellincourt's estimation; for, among the greatest blessings bestowed by nature on mankind, she reckoned that of a heart full of the milk of human kindness the first. The expression of their feelings having assumed a calmer

aspect, Lady Ellincourt requested the party to accompany her home, and spend the remainder of the joyous day at her mansion. This proposition Desmond seconded the more earnestly, that he might enjoy the company of Lady Caroline, whose beauty and the slight conversation he had with her, made such an inroad to his affections, as left all chance of escape (if her mind appeared disposed to hold him captive) impossible. The continual expressions of gratitude with which Marian noticed the name of Desmond, and the amiable character which Lady Dunboyne bestowed upon him, added to his interesting appearance, made the susceptible Caroline long for the return of her mother, that she might again have the pleasure of Desmond's company. In this wish she was gratified, for the whole party arrived, and Desmond, without perceiving it, found himself seated beside the fair object of his tenderest regards. This day, passing amidst the most pleasurable sensations, almost banished from the mind of Ponituski the fate of his country, and nearly obliterated from his memory the time—

> When leagu'd Oppression pour'd to Northern wars
> Her whisker'd panders, and her fierce hussars—
> Wav'd her dread standard to the breeze of morn,
> Peal'd her loud drum, and twang'd her trumpet horn;
> Tumultuous horror brooded round her van,
> Presaging wrath to Poland—and to man.

Not long after the introduction of the friends to Lady Ellincourt, Digby received the hand of the fair Marian, and proceeded with his beloved bride, accompanied by her father, to Digby Hall, in Northamptonshire.

Desmond continued a welcome visitor at Lady Ellincourt's; and, as the Watkins's had returned to America, he had the more leisure to study the character of Caroline, which he found to be all he wished for. Making his proposals to the mother

they were accepted, and Sir Christopher was introduced to Lady Caroline as a lover, countenanced by her respected and revered mother Well would it be if the selections made by parents and the affections of children would accord, as this did. Caroline loved him, and the passion was equally ardent in the breast of Desmond. Sir Christopher's mother arriving, in company with Lord and Lady Dunboyne, they urged the beauteous Caroline to name an early day for the celebration of their nuptials. This, Desmond himself strove to accelerate, by every device which love could dictate. One day, entering the library where Lady Caroline was reading, he requested to see the work which seemed so intensely to absorb her thoughts: this she complied with—it was Campbell's delightful poem, "The Pleasures of Hope." Desmond immediately pointed out the following beautiful passage for her perusal:—

Without the smile from partial beauty won,
Oh! what were man?—a world without a sun:
Till Hymen brought his love-delighted hour,
There dwelt no joy in Eden's lovely bower!
In vain the viewless seraph ling'ring there,
At starry midnight charm'd the silent air;
In vain the wild bird carroll'd on the steep,
To hail the sun, slow wheeling from the deep;
In vain, to sooth the solitary shade,
Aerial notes in mingling measure play'd,
The summer wind that shook the spangled tree,
The whispering wave, the murmur of the bee;—
Still slowly pass'd the melancholy day,
And still the stranger wist not where to stray:—
The world was sad!—the garden was a wild!
And man, the hermit, sigh'd—'till woman smil'd!

Desmond was happy; his Caroline smiled; and, 'ere maiden modesty could recall the sweet telltale which played round her cherry lips, Sir Christopher clasped the sweet maid to his bosom;—"to-morrow—to-morrow, my dear Caroline, let the world resume its every charm—be mine, my adored." "Well, then, to-morrow," answered the blushing dame, and, breaking from his fond

embrace, flew and hid her crimsoned face in the bosom of Lady Ellincourt.

Desmond was the more eager to have his nuptials solemnized, as his presence was become necessary in Ireland; and his friend Digby being in town, together with Count Ponituski, and the amiable Mrs. Digby, he wished to have them present at the ceremony.

And now that day, to which so many look forward as the gate of happiness—which so many thoughtlessly enter—which so many, for mercenary motives, eagerly look towards—arrived. Desmond, on this his wedding-day, solemnly prostrated himself before his Maker, praying for his guidance and direction in the new sphere of life in which he was just going to move. Nor did his Caroline neglect to offer up her devotions at the throne of mercy, for grace to guide her in the new situation she was entering upon. She was that day to be united to the man she adored; a new circle of acquaintances awaited her, and her chief residence was to be in a distant country. The ceremony over, they immediately proceeded for Ireland; and, at intervals, Sir Christopher and Lady Desmond visited their friends in England. That honor which marked his early youth, increased with his manhood; as a husband—a father—a friend—a master—he was, what those who were so placed as to be acquainted with him in any of these relative situations, would wish. To the mansion of this gentleman, Mr. Hamilton and Lord Ellincourt directed their course, particularly as it was in the immediate neighbourhood of Ballafyn.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

The Duel.

We will now return to Ballafyn Castle, where all was confusion, noise, and uproar, as soon as Fanny was missed; which was not until a late hour on the ensuing morning; for, as she had refused to admit either Rose or Mrs. Owen the whole of the preceding day, they concluded she was either sulky or asleep; and, after finding entreaties and threats equally unavailing, they broke into her apartment, and, to their astonishment, found it empty, without the smallest trace being visible how Fanny had escaped: the consternation was general, and mutual accusations passed between Mrs. Owen and her niece Rose; each believing, or affecting to believe, that the other was privy to her disappearance.

Rose, who had a very feeling heart, and who had found herself strongly inclined to love Fanny, was greatly concerned on the occasion, and a thousand fears lest some private disposal had been made of the poor young lady by her aunt, in concert with Lord Ballafyn, alarmed her compassionate breast. She was soon convinced, however, by the genuine rage that burst forth from his lordship, on being informed of Fanny's disappearance, that he was not a party concerned in it. It was quite

impossible to conjecture what could have become of her, because her escape from the window was totally impossible, unless aided by some abettor without; and that she could not have made any friend in that part of the world was equally evident, since she had never been permitted to quit the house, even for a stroll in the park, unattended.

The most prevailing opinion now amongst the servants was, that she had been carried away by the supernatural agency of the banshee. The existence of this ideal being is so firmly believed in by the lower classes of the Irish peasantry, that to doubt its reality would be considered a species of scepticism deserving of punishment here, and sure of it hereafter; and they began to look upon one another with stifled horror, and wonder whose turn would be the next.

Not so Lord Ballafyn; superstition made no part of his creed; he attributed the event to the villany of some of his servants, who had been induced to connive at her escape, by the fascination in her manner which had so completely captivated his lordship. He therefore breathed nothing but vengeance, and walked about the Castle, swearing that, if Fanny was not found within twelve hours, he would shoot every person he suspected as her accomplice.

In the midst of all this bustle, Colonel Ross arrived: he was surprised to find his brother at the Castle before him, as he had understood, by his last letter, that his Lordship would be detained in Dublin above a fortnight beyond the present period; and, during that interval, he had hoped so to dispose of Fanny, as to have secured her possession entirely to himself; jealousy was roused, therefore, when he found his brother already at the Castle; and rage was added to that feeling,

when he heard that she was no where to be found. In the first paroxysm of passion, the two brothers began abusing each other in the most violent manner. Colonel Ross did not hesitate to accuse Lord Ballafyn with having secreted Fanny, on purpose to deprive him of her; adding, that the well-known infamy of his brother's character might have warned him not to trust so practised a villain with a treasure of such inestimable value.

And thus, reader, it is ever with the sons of vice; however firmly their friendship may seem united—however near they may be allied—however their pursuits may appear to cement them—yet to such a height do they carry their selfishness, that every circumstance which should be a bond of union among them, vanishes whenever one profligate companion counteracts the design of his fellow: thus was it between those brothers. Equally guilty, they began to recriminate each other, and the most vile language seemed inadequate to express the feelings of their diabolical minds.

Lord Ballafyn was an Irishman in every thing but honor; but there he belied his country. His spirit was too turbulent and haughty to brook the aggravating expressions made use of by his brother; and, bidding him defiance, he seized his pistols, and ordered him to follow him to the plantation, at a little distance from the house.

Colonel Ross, whose whole frame shook with a fury no wise inferior to that which transported his brother, obeyed the mandate, and in a few minutes the wretched culprits had sealed their condemnation in each other's blood; and the crime of Cain was renewed by the mutual fratricides. Both fired, and both fell, whilst the sanguine stream dyed the conscious earth, and, smoaking up to heaven, called down tenfold vengeance on the murderer.

But let us turn from the horrid scene, and visit Fanny in her calm retreat; let us behold her seated at her mother's feet, whose emaciated hand was fast locked between the soft pressure of her daughter's, and as with filial love, amounting to veneration, she gazes on the care-worn features of the angelic sufferer, we may see the large pearly drops of tenderest sympathy roll down her lovely cheek.

Her mother now told the sad tale of her sufferings, already related to the reader, with this only addition, that when, after Mr. Hamilton's visit to Ballafyn Castle had excited the jealous rage of its imperious owner, the treatment of the wretched Lady Ballafyn had been beyond measure intolerable, and she had the most urgent reasons to believe that her death was intended by her remorseless lord.

The intervention of honest Dermot had prevented the catastrophe, and the unhappy lady had found a safe and comfortable asylum with the benevolent nuns; who, though differing from her in some points of religion, had never varied in their attentions to her comforts, nor denied their sympathy to her sufferings.

In her turn, Fanny had related the eventful narrative of her life, and the wonderful discovery of her parents, which had been made to her by Mr. Hamilton. But, Heavens! what were Lady Ballafyn's emotions, when she heard that *he*, for whose sake she had suffered so severely, still existed! A wildness took possession of the unfortunate lady, that greatly alarmed Fanny; but the tender blandishments of her daughter gradually restored her to peace, and she made her repeat, over and over again, those parts of the story most interesting to her heart. To find that Fanny had been introduced to her cousin, Lord Ellincourt, in so wonderful a manner, and afterwards so kindly

adopted both by his lordship and his mother, called forth the tear of gratitude and joy upon the cheek of the interesting mother.

Whilst the mother and daughter were engaged in this tender discourse, they were interrupted by the arrival of the Duke of Albemarle. He was admitted to their presence, and began apologizing for his late visit; but so sweetly had their time stole away, in the interesting communications they had been mutually making, that they had not perceived the lapse of time. Fanny immediately begged leave to introduce her mother to the Duke, who received the information with a look of surprise amounting almost to incredulity.

"I bring you news," said he, "that will surprise you almost as much as you have done me: some of your best friends have arrived in search of you: I have this moment spoken to Lord Ellincourt, who tells me he was accompanied by Mr. Hamilton."

"Oh, Heavens, my father!" exclaimed Fanny, "let me fly and embrace him." But, as she spoke, she turned, and saw her mother pale and faint. Every other feeling now gave way to terror for that dear parent's safety; nor would she say another word to the Duke until she had seen her perfectly restored, and persuaded her to retire to her bed, to compose her shattered nerves, where she left her in the care of one of the benevolent nuns, whilst she went to learn the particulars of the joyful news just announced to her.

"May I not fly to my dear father?" said the affectionate Fanny, when she returned to the Duke.

"No, lovely girl," replied his Grace, "your father will be here very shortly; Sir Christopher Desmond, Lord Ellincourt, and several gentlemen of the neighbourhood, with him; they are at present engaged in a very melancholy office,

that of giving orders for the proper attendance on two unfortunate men, who, forgetful of their duty to God and themselves, have been engaged in a duel."

The Duke then briefly related the particulars of Lord Ballafyn's and Colonel Ross's quarrel, and its fatal termination.

"They are both wounded desperately," said he, "but not dead. Mr. Hamilton and Lord Ellincourt arrived at the Castle at the precise moment when the wretched men were being carried into it. I had been attracted to the fatal spot by the report of fire-arms, and came up to the combatants just as they both fell.

"I hastily summoned assistance from the Castle, and the wounded brothers were conveyed thither by the terrified servants, who at first eyed me with a suspicious look, imagining that I had had a hand in the fatal catastrophe. The incoherent sentences uttered by Lord Ballafyn soon convinced them of their mistake; for, although he spoke with difficulty, he said enough to exculpate me.

"The arrival of Lord Ellincourt and Mr. Hamilton at such a moment, increased the confusion; for the former, with the impetuosity natural to his character, began a string of questions relating to you, my sweet friend, which it was impossible the servants could answer satisfactorily; and learning that you had been at the Castle, and were now missing, made him outrageous.

"To calm his rising passion I advanced towards him, for I had entered the hall with the throng of domestics, and, as I knew more about you than any one there, I thought it my duty to relieve his anxiety; but I had nearly got into a scrape with the choleric Lord, for he immediately suspected me of being concerned in the barbarous violence of taking you from England.

"Mr. Hamilton's calmness was here of great service to us; and the explanation was at length made in a satisfactory manner, and his lordship's resentment changed into the most enthusiastic gratitude.

"I explained to him the manner in which I had been deceived by Lord Somertown's pretended permission to pay my addresses to you, which was only given me to add mortification to disappointment, for he well knew you were to be removed from Pemberton Abbey before I could arrive there.

"By the fortunate circumstance of my meeting with the woman whose husband acted as chief manager of the infernal plot, I became master of the important secret that so nearly concerned my happiness. She mistook me for Lord Ellincourt, whose arrival was hourly expected, and enjoining me to secrecy as to the source from whence I drew my information, she entreated me to lose no time in flying to your assistance. She directed me the exact route you had taken, and she described your terror and distress, during the part of the journey she had accompanied you, with a degree of sympathy that will ever make me remember Mrs. Franklyn with pleasure. I crossed by the same vessel that had taken you over, and learned at the cabin of poor Dermot the rest of the particulars necessary for your deliverance.

"I determined to effect that first, with the assistance of that honest fellow, and then call the infamous author of your imprisonment to the account his crimes merited; but another hand has chastised him, and I am satisfied.

"A surgeon had arrived at the Castle before I came away, and he pronounced the wounds of both the unprincipled brothers very dangerous, but Lord Ballafyn's the most so. His lordship has been made acquainted with his danger, and

remorse has visited his heart: he has desired to see Lord Ellincourt; but, as the surgeon said any violent emotion might be instantly fatal, the interview has not yet taken place. His lordship does not know that Mr. Hamilton is in existence; at least, he dreams not that his house now holds the man whom he has so irreparably injured.

"Concealment is now no longer necessary," added the Duke; "your enemies are incapable of further injuring you, and, indeed, if they were not so, you are surrounded with a posse of friends able to defend you from their malice: it is therefore proposed, that you should be removed to Lord Ellincourt's sister's, Lady Caroline, who has been prepared to expect you; she lives at no great distance from hence, and Lord Ellincourt, Mr. Hamilton, and Sir Christopher, mean to come prepared to escort you there."

"But I have found a parent here," said Fanny, "a parent that they have no idea is in existence, and I cannot so soon consent to tear myself away from her; and I am persuaded she will never quit these walls whilst Lord Ballafyn lives."

"That may not be long," replied the Duke, "for the surgeon gives but very poor hopes of his recovery. But I mean not to dictate to you, madam: Mr. Hamilton and his friends are coming, and then my mission ends. O may that gentle bosom deign to bestow some compassion on the man who exists but in the hope of being one day dear to you!"

"I entreat your grace never to mention that subject to me again," said Fanny; "your addresses are unsanctioned by your uncle, nay, against his consent, and cannot therefore be received by me."

"Of my uncle I beseech you never to think again," said the Duke; "he has for ever broken the link that held me to him; the insult he has offered me, by pretending to give his consent to a marriage which he believed at the moment could

never take place, has determined me to renounce him, and I have written to him expressive of my resolution. I told him in that letter that I would never rest until I found you, and, wherever I did find you, and in whatsoever circumstances you might be placed, I would lay my fortune at your feet, and consider your acceptance of it as the only thing which could give it value in my eyes. That moment is now arrived, and I throw myself on your mercy, and expect the sentence of life or death from your hands."

Before Fanny had time to reply, Mr. Hamilton and Lord Ellincourt arrived, and the scene that followed, put all ideas of love out of Fanny's head.

The discovery of Lady Ballafyn's existence was a surprise so sudden and unexpected, that it nearly overturned Mr. Hamilton's faculties, and he was some hours before he had sufficiently recovered the shock to converse with any degree of self-collectedness upon the subject. The manner of introducing himself to her presence became the next consideration; and it was agreed that the interview should be deferred for a few days, as during that period, perhaps, Lord Ballafyn might pay the forfeit of his crimes. The event justified the supposition; for the unhappy nobleman breathed his last just eight and forty hours after the duel, in the most excruciating tortures both of mind and body.

Mr. Hamilton visited him to pronounce forgiveness for the injuries he had sustained from the dying sinner; but, alas, the sight of him threw Lord Ballafyn into a delirium that ended in his dissolution; and thus the wretched sufferer was deprived of the consolation the christian charity of the godlike Hamilton had intended to bestow upon him.

Oh! sons of vice—children of folly—you who

seek pleasure in the gratification of every sensual desire—who despise the honest and the honourable —in whose eyes the religious are hypocrites—the generous vain—the benevolent ostentatious—pursue your evil courses—rise from one degree of vice to another—attain its very climax—yet, let but death lay his cold hand upon you, and all your boasted hardihood vanishes. The soul, horror struck, dreads to leave its tenement of clay, and hell commences here, 'ere spirit and body part.

I will not pretend to describe the meeting between Mr. Hamilton and his long-lost Emily; for it is impossible for any pen to do justice to such high-wrought feelings as filled the breasts of the long-severed lovers. The presence of their child increased their joy, and the excess of their happiness seemed to threaten to be more fatal to their health than even their long sufferings had been; for both of them fell ill in consequence of the violent effect so wonderful a revolution had taken upon their frail constitutions.

At length, however, they recovered, and the happy party removed to Sir Christopher Desmond's, where they spent a few weeks of uninterrupted felicity; after which the whole party, with the exception of the injured Emily, returned to England, in order to make the proper investigation into Lord Somertown's conduct, and to prove the marriage his infamous plots had annulled, and on which proof depended the legitimacy of Fanny's birth-right. Emily, who had now dropped the title of Lady Ballafyn, insisted upon remaining at the hospitable convent, until every thing should be settled respecting the validity of her marriage, and refused, with determined steadiness, the entreaties of her daughter to permit her to remain with her.

"No, my child," said she, "return to the amiable Lady, your near and dear relative, who

so kindly fostered you when she thought you a stranger and an outcast; go to her, and bear the rich oblations of gratitude and affection, from a heart that has been long dead to this world, but which now once more palpitates with the best feelings of humanity, and tell her I yet cherish the fond hope of being folded to her maternal bosom. I have no doubt of the success of your noble-minded father's exertions in our behalf; they will be crowned with success, and my darling girl will be presented to the world with the splendour that so justly belongs to her. But never lose sight of this maxim, my child, when pleasure courts you, and adulation whispers in your ear, those praises that are ever bestowed upon the rich and noble:—Virtue is the only true distinction, and he that acts up to her dictates can never be base, how mean soever his situation in life; nor can the slave of vice be noble, though invested with the trappings of royalty itself."

Before the party set off for England, especial care was taken by Fanny that the family of honest Dermot should be rewarded for their exertions in her behalf. She found herself forestalled, however, in her kind intention by the generous Albemarle, who, impatient to reward the humble benefactors of the woman he adored, had purchased a piece of land for them, adjoining their cottage, which was sufficient, with a little industry, to maintain them all comfortably: to this gift, Fanny added a sum of money, bestowed upon her by her father, to enable them to build a comfortable cabin in lieu of the wretched one they now inhabited.

There was nothing could equal the happiness of this honest family, excepting their gratitude: both these feelings were without bounds, and they followed their benefactors with blessings, until they reached the port where they were to embark, and knelt down upon the beach, with all the enthusi-

The affecting meeting of M.r Hamilton and his long lost Emily. Page 371.

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asm that marks their countrymen, to pray for a good voyage for the travellers. The humble petition was heard at the throne of grace; and Fanny, accompanied by her father, Lord Ellincourt, and the Duke of Albemarle, arrived in safety at Pemberton Abbey, in three days from their departure from Donaghadee. Lady Dowager Ellincourt and her daughter-in-law, the amiable Emily, were waiting to receive them, and Fanny was pressed alternately in their arms, with all the fervour of affectionate joy.

The happy termination of all their sorrows had been announced to them by letter, and Pemberton Abbey was appointed the place of rendezvous. Poor Lady Maria Ross was still an inhabitant of that mansion; but grief and anxiety had preyed so severely upon her gentle mind, that she was confined by severe illness to her bed, and thereby rendered incapable of flying to the pillow of her suffering and now deeply-penitent husband, Colonel Ross who still lay with very slender hopes of recovery, at the dreary castle of Ballafyn, and who expressed the most earnest wish to see his injured wife.

Amongst the happy group assembled at Pemberton Abbey, we must not forget Mrs. Bolton, who had never quitted Lady Ellincourt during the dreadful suspense she had been suffering whilst Fanny was missing.

Mr. Hamilton took every step to trace the wicked and treacherous Franklin, who had so basely betrayed his helpless daughter into the hands of her enemies, for the consideration of five hundred pounds, which was paid him by the detestable Lord Somertown. The wretch, however, eluded their vigilance for the present; for, as soon as he found his wife had betrayed him, he made off to Portsmouth, and, entering on board a ship

just sailing for the West-Indies, he escaped the pursuit.

In consideration of Mrs. Franklyn's tenderness to Fanny, and her subsequent discovery of the plot to the Duke, she was pardoned, and received a small annuity from the bounty of the Duke.

In short, that young nobleman behaved with such generosity, and displayed so noble a spirit throughout the whole of this business, that Mr. Hamilton and Lord Ellincourt joined their eloquence to that of the two Ladies Ellincourt, to persuade Fanny to accept his offered hand.

It was difficult to resist such *special* pleaders, particularly as she felt a still more powerful advocate for his cause in her own bosom. Fanny, therefore, yielded to the persuasions of her friends, and gave a conditional promise to marry the Duke, provided her *mother* approved of the match.

The Duke was all love, gratitude, and rapture; and, in consideration of this arrangement, it was agreed that Mr. Hamilton should drop his claim to the Albemarle title, and suffer the two claims to be united in the persons of the two lovers.

It was now absolutely necessary to break up the happy party, and that the gentlemen should go to London; but the ladies remained with Lady Maria, who now began to recover her strength, and promised herself the consolation of visiting her poor husband, now Lord Ballafyn, in his mournful confinement.

It had been proved, on the inquest that had been taken at the time of Lord Ballafyn's death, that *he* was the aggressor; Colonel Ross's life was not therefore endangered by any thing but by his wounds, which still continued very unfavourable in their appearance, owing to the harassed state of his mind, which was now a chaos of remorse, terror, and contrition.

The presence of his lady, who flew to his assistance, as soon as her health permitted her, restored him to some degree of composure; for her gentle nature induced her to pronounce the most unequivocal pardon on the penitent sinner, as far as she was concerned.

Mr. Hamilton soon settled his business in town; the validity of his marriage was proved beyond a doubt, by the assistance of Mr. Fortescue, who had the satisfaction of receiving his favorite *mopasses*, as the meed of his testimony.

In regard to Lord Somertown, all proceedings against him were become unnecessary; Heaven had anticipated the punishment designed him, and visited him with a total privation of his mental faculties. He lived but a short time after Mr. Hamilton's return, and died at last despised and detested, leaving his name covered with the infamy of his long-concealed actions, which now became known to the world, filling it at once with horror and detestation for the monster which had so long encumbered the earth.

Lord Ellincourt and Mr. Hamilton set off for Ireland as soon as the business was settled, to fetch the amiable and long-suffering Emily; and, soon after her return, the nuptials of her beloved daughter were to be solemnized with the Duke of Albemarle.

Lady Mornington wrote her congratulations to Fanny, on the joyful occasion, in her usual gay strain; part of the letter ran thus:—

"It mortifies me that I cannot fly to you, and present my congratulations in person; but I will take my revenge as soon as I can, and then you will have a hard matter to get rid of me. I hope the Duke did not make such a long face at your wedding as he did at mine. I long to see him in the character of a Benedict.

"A propos, I am very angry that your ballad

so far surpasses mine in romantic incident; I was thinking of turning my story into a romance, but it will not do now. Your's has, besides, an *elevement*, castles, enchanted rocks, disguised knights-errant, and subterraneous caverns, and heaven knows what.

"But I think the best of your story is the death of *Bluebeard;*—you know who I mean. The old Giant of Grumbo is dead too, so farewell to adventures. I am afraid you will be obliged to go soberly on all the days of your life, without the smallest chance of your being run away with any more.

"How I long to embrace all the dear circle! Yes, you may look, but I assure you I intend to salute the Duke for his pretty chivalric expedition in search of an oppressed damsel.

"I think he had been reading Ariosto before he set out, he went about giant-killing so handily. Farewell: your happiness *must* be incomplete whilst you want the society of your mad friend,

"AMELIA MORNINGTON."

CHAPTER XL.

The Marriage.

It only now remains for me to add, the happy party soon after arrived in England, and Fanny had once more to experience the delightful sensation of pressing to her bosom her earliest friend, and of receiving the affectionate and joyful embrace of her revered benefactress, Lady Ellincourt, who, as she gazed on the finely-expressive countenance of her beloved niece, could not help exclaiming, "It is, indeed, the child of my ill-fated, my noble brother! and I never shall sufficiently accuse myself of stupid insensibility, for not immediately discovering in that face *his* 'every feature more elegantly touched.'"

The Duke now waited impatiently the arrival of Sir Everard and Lady Mornington, who had altered her determination, and had written to Fanny to say, she should expire if she was not present at her marriage, as she understood it had not yet taken place.

In the morning the lively Amelia arrived, and Fanny had now, under the same roof, every friend she loved; and the marriage shortly after took place between the Duke and the amiable girl. The grand saloon of Lady Ellincourt's house was

fitted up for the performance of the ceremony, and as his Grace approached the blushing girl, Lady Mornington congratulated him with her usual sprightliness on the improvement of his appearance, which, she declared, had lately undergone a most *wonderful* change for the better; for, at her marriage, he performed the "knight of the rueful countenance," with such considerable eclat, that she really imagined his future intentions were to fight giants, and rescue persecuted damsels from enchanted castles: "but," continued her ladyship, laughing, "I am highly delighted at your sagacious *selection* of the *damsel* you were to emerge from dreary confinement; and here, I am led to believe, ends your Grace's exploits in chivalry."

The Duke acknowledged her ladyship's opinion was perfectly correct; and, bowing with an air of gallantry, assured her, "her lively sallies *now* delighted him."

"Did you ever hear the like?" exclaimed the lively Amelia, turning to Fanny; "what a mortifying confession; it is a tacit intimation, that I did not *always* delight; but, however, I really possess so sweet a disposition, that it induces me to forgive you; for I know, on a day like this, happiness intoxicates, and may make you find impurity in the drifted snow, spots in the sun, or faults in the *amiable* Lady Mornington."

Fanny could not forbear a smile at the agreeable gaiety of her friend, although she never felt more disposed to be serious.

Mr. Hamilton now approached, and, taking the hand of his daughter, moved towards the apartment destined for the performance of the sacred ceremony: the Duke received her from the hands of her father as Heaven's best gift, and led her to the altar, where the bishop of L—— stood ready to unite them for ever.

Fanny supported herself with a placid dignity, and firmly answered the solemn impressive questions addressed to her by the bishop. The ceremony now concluded, she gracefully received the congratulations of the party, and kissing her hand, as farewell, was led to the carriage in waiting by the enraptured Duke, and they immediately set off to Albemarle Park. Lord and Lady Ellincourt, Lady Mornington, &c. were to follow in two days.

A month soon elapsed, and the happy party returned to town, in order to be introduced at court. It was agreed that the three brides, Lady Ellincourt, Lady Mornington, and our heroine, should be presented the same day; and now all was bustle and confusion; nothing but milliners, dress-makers, &c. crowded the hall. At length the important day arrived, and never was a more brilliant and crowded drawing-room than that which graced the introduction of the youthful, elegant, and blooming Duchess of Albemarle to the first court in Europe: the three ladies were attired alike in Brussels lace falling over white satin, with a profusion of diamonds; feathers and diamonds adorned their heads: the only difference was, that a ducal coronet of diamonds encircled the fair forehead of Fanny. A buz of astonishment followed their entrance into the anti-chamber; and *though* the gentlemen allowed the Ladies Ellincourt and Mornington to be fine women, *yet* that the Duchess was the superlative degree, was voted *nem. con.*

Her Majesty received her with infinite condescension, and honoured her with particular attention, intimating her hopes of frequently seeing her Grace of Albemarle adorn, by her presence, the circle of the drawing-room. Bending with a graceful dignity peculiar to herself, she acknowledged with gratitude how much she felt the honor

conferred by the condescension of her sovereign, and after a few minutes conversation she prepared to quit the presence. A murmur of admiration followed the departure of the fascinating Duchess, who, the gentlemen again declared, would be the prevailing *toast for at least three winters.*

"How d'ye do?" "Charmingly warm!" "Delightful squeeze!" were addressed to her by so many strangers, who evidently wished to be *strangers* no longer, that it was with difficulty a passage was opened for the party to pass, so eager were the fashionable world now to attract the notice and obtain an introduction to the lately *slighted, forlorn*—FATHERLESS FANNY!!! who was now no longer an orphan, and the object of impertinent curiosity, in the gay world that she frequented, but the beloved daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton; the wife of one of the first nobles in the kingdom; and the radiant star wherever she appeared. Yet, amongst the praises that were deservedly lavished upon her from every quarter, and the homage that was almost bestowed upon her beauty, by some gentlemen, who perhaps held her personal charms in higher estimation than the brilliancy of her understanding, and the intrinsic qualities of her heart, she still maintained the same unassuming deportment—the same mild gentle demeanour.

Though compelled, by the station to which she was raised, to mingle amongst the fashionable throng, she despised the glittering vanities she beheld, and never felt so truly blest as when enjoying the society of her husband, and a party of select friends, at their beloved retirement in Hampshire. Thither they had spent the honey-moon, and on those seasons when parliamentary business did not require the Duke in London, they delighted to sojourn. Pemberton Abbey was also

a favourite residence. Memory had first endeared it to our heroine: she was enraptured with its venerable shades, 'ere time acquainted her that it was there she drew her first breath. Within the walls of the chosen structure her suffering mother gave her existence; and nature, pure but powerful nature, dictated a preference for the sublime retreat. Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton took up their abode there: it was sufficiently large both for the family of the Ellincourts and them to hold possession. The Dowager Lady Ellincourt, as also her daughter, became tenderly attached to the mother of their sweet Fanny, and it was the mutual wish of all parties that one roof should contain them. Lord Ellincourt was the best of husbands· he loved the amiable Emily with an affection that virtues bright as her's could not fail to excite in a breast replete with such transcendant goodness; and the afflictions which the mother of her, whom he had been wont to call his little Fan, had undergone, whilst bearing the hated title of Lady Ballafyn, raised the tear of sympathy in his susceptible bosom: his character is already known; it would be needless here to expatiate on his merits; but we shall have many opportunities of displaying his generosity as we go on. The Duke of Albemarle was a model for his sex to follow: he was a stranger to the ways of dissipation. Till he was so inexpressibly happy as to become the accidental means of saving his adored from the fall she would have otherwise sustained, the passion of love was a guest with whom he was unacquainted. The fascinations of the fair had never possessed power to alter the happy system of his disposition; the name of seduction was odious to his ear; and, when he heard of plans laid to betray defenceless innocence, he invariably expressed himself with detestation towards their perpetrators.

This feeling was doubly riveted in his soul after he had seen the peerless maid on whom he fixed his heart; he resolved to unite his hand honorably with hers, and, by so doing, prove the extent of the adoration she had inspired. There could not be a stronger evidence of the sincerity of his regard, than the fervency with which he paid his addresses, before he was informed of the secret of her birth; it was her mind and her angelic person that he courted, not her fortune or her rank.

His Grace had early learnt to penetrate the thick evil of dissimulation worn by his dissolute companions; and his native good sense instructed him to despise the arts they adopted to accomplish their designs. His friend, Lord Ellincourt, was not quite so deep a philosopher: before his marriage with the enchanting Emily, his principles were not so strict as they should have been; yet never did he devise projects for the destruction of virtue. After the union of Lord Ellincourt with the attracting Miss Barlowe, his thoughts never centered for a moment in any other woman; he considered her the mirror of female excellence, and began to view with utter contempt the life he had led, till introduced by Providence to her society. One day, when holding a conversation with the Duke of Albemarle on this subject, he thus expressed himself: "Oh, how blest is the condition of matrimony; I need not describe to your Grace the delights that it produces, as you are yourself so well acquainted with them; but had mortals an insight into half the joys that heavenly state unfolds, how few would pass their days in a routine of nothingness, enter into criminal engagements with the most worthless of the sex, and disdain the possession of one deserving fair, whose perfections reach beyond a captivating exterior, and whose beauties are of such a nature as will last to the end of time." "Would that your observation

was just, my dear fellow," replied the Duke; "but I am very much afraid, from the manners of the *beau monde*, that sentiments such as yours, and such as I trust are mine, are nearly obsolete; nothing seems to afford pleasure in this luxurious age, but extravagance and intrigue: morality is discarded from the assemblies of the great, and voluptuousness takes the lead in place of sober reflection. As to love, it appears to be banished from the breasts of the masculine gender: in women that sensation is more predominant than ever; but we only affect to love, whereas in them there is no deceit—they yield to us all that can make them valuable, and we in return hate them for consenting to our desires. Marriage, that presents to us a prospect so agreeable, is treated with derision by the rakes of London: oft am I compelled to listen to the abominable discourses of these modern hell-hounds, and numberless are the disputes into which I have been drawn for persisting in maintaining my own opinions, which I glory in acknowledging, they are widely opposite from those asserted by the profane wretches in question."

"It is indeed a cause of concern," answered Lord Ellincourt, "that vice should dwell so wholly in our depraved race, as to render us insensible to the solid charms of virtue. I was once indifferent to her pursuit, though I never viewed her with an eye of ridicule, or spoke of her in language of contempt: but since the wise goodness of the Eternal has thought fit to bestow upon me the divinest of treasures, in granting me the hand of my ever-dear Emily, I am awakened to a perfect consciousness of the guilt of searching for happiness in licentious and forbidden joys. You have frequently heard me observe, and I again repeat it, that the first memorable action of my life was done without any previous design to perform one. I was anxious for the restoration of a faithful little animal, and

in my efforts to recover that, I was the means of rendering a service to the charming creature who is now your wife. This event gave a turn to my imagination, and from that moment the illuminating beams of knowledge seemed to irradiate my intellects, and inspire me with higher perceptions than I had before been endued with: my conscience approved of the deed, and your Grace will allow, that conscience is a never-failing director, if we would attend to her dictates." "I have ever found it such," replied the Duke, "and my ideas on marriage coincide exactly with your own. Fanny is all the fondest husband could desire, and more than any man expects to find in woman." "I prophesied what an angel she would be," said Lord Ellincourt, "when I saw her a little cherub of five years old at that gypsied hag's, Miss Bridewell's; her countenance denoted something more than ordinary at that early age."

"I suppose that lady will be Miss to all eternity," replied the Duke.

"I am sure she would be *beyond* eternity for me," cried the sarcastic Lord: "if there was no other female between here and the coast of Negroland, I would not deprive her of that appellation. She would stand as secure from an invasion as the infernal furies, styled Alecto, Tisiphone, and Magæror. Who'd marry a woman that is old, ugly, proud, bad-tempered, puffed up with self-conceit, vain without the shadow of a pretence for being so? Bless me, my Lord, were I to write down a sum total of all the odious qualities that belong to the blooming virgin of fifty-five, it would certainly occupy two months to peruse them, and that merely an abridgement; if I were to revise them systematically, in the manner of the Cyclopædia, it would be nearer two years." The Duke could not help smiling at this lengthened harangue on the demerits of the unamiable Miss Bridewell,

who he knew had never been a favourite with his friend. "On my word," said he, "you seem to have summed her up in a very few minutes—I know not whether your calculation is just." "Why, could you love such a piece of stiff formality?" humorously asked his Lordship. "Love," answered he, in the same jocular strain, "no, I could as soon love an inanimate statue: I should expect no warmth there; and if I expected it in her, I should doubtless be disappointed." "I acknowledge," said Lord Ellincourt, "that I ought not to be so inveterate, considering that my going to the beldam's, first introduced me to the sweet Fanny—that should soften my rugged heart in her favor; but then, when I think of her behaviour towards that innocent, I am doubly enraged, since she proved her views of interest in every particular." The conversation here turned. Lord Ellincourt inquired, "if his Grace had seen Sir Everard Mornington recently." "Not very," he answered; "we expect him and his lively lady shortly, to pass a few weeks at our seat in Hampshire." "They promise to be a happy couple," said his Lordship. "I have no doubt but they will," replied the Duke; "they are equally matched, and both full of rattle, as it is called: he is a keen sportsman, and I understand she attends him in his hunting and shooting expeditions." "Ah, they will be tired of that way of life by-and-by," rejoined Lord Ellincourt, "and glad to act more like rational creatures." "Very possible," returned the Duke, "but I think that period will not arrive till they have seen every thing that is to be seen in London, and then, mayhap, completely fatigued with such an endless round of diversions, they will seek for felicity in sequestered glades, and rural bowers."

This discourse was held at Pemberton Abbey, where the Duke and Duchess were on a visit; they had been married two months, but were still

overwhelmed with compliments on the blissful occasion. The lovely Fanny, though tenderly attached to the Ellincourts, had yet another reason for wishing to spend much of her time there; it was the residence of her parents—those parents, whom till lately she had never seen—whose sorrows she had been unacquainted with—of whose existence she had even entertained a doubt: now that their identity was ascertained, and they were restored to happiness and each other, it was natural she should desire to participate in the delightful emotions they mutually experienced; and her affection for them doubly endeared her to the Duke, as he read her future conduct as a wife, in her present, as a daughter. A child that is wanting in love and duty to her parents, will never be worth the acceptance of any man; she has broken the first law of nature, and there is little reason to suppose that she will act her part better in the sacred state of matrimony: duty may here however be termed an improper expression, as our heroine had been estranged from those revered relatives till at an age when their guidance was unnecessary; but she had still consulted their will, and received their permission to yield herself in marriage, or even the Duke of Albemarle would have been rejected; and the exquisite feelings of gratitude and joy which she manifested at their deliverance from affliction, and entrance into bliss, plainly shewed her respect and reverence for them. She found a melancholy satisfaction in conversing with her mother on the calamities that had befallen the latter, and rejoicing at their termination: the death of Lord Ballafyn was a sort of ecstacy, as, had he survived, he might still have laboured to destroy the peace of the amiable Mrs. Hamilton. Nor could she lament that of Lord Somertown; his character was so despicable, and his hatred of her so obvious, that it would have been affectation

to pretend it: she nevertheless returned thanks to Heaven that they had died penitent for their crimes; as that was the only atonement they could make for their offences. Colonel Ross, now Lord Ballafyn, had entirely recovered from the effects of his wounds, and I wish I could add, that they had produced that reformation in his principles, which had been hoped and expected from his sufferings, and the contrition that was then evident in his heart; but, as soon as he was declared out of all danger, he again rushed into dissipation, and neglected the gentle Lady Maria, who loved him, notwithstanding his baseness, with an unceasing affection. Though his hand had sent his wretched guilty brother to the tomb, the remembrance of that was not sufficiently painful to deter him from the commission of those vices which had already proved but too fatal to him; he however acquired additional dissimulation with an additional share of wickedness. He still wore the mask of sorrow; and when his increased coolness was observed by his unhappy wife, he attributed it to the despondent grief of his mind, and entreated her to believe that she was dearer to him than ever. "But this despondency is wrong, my beloved husband," cried the amiable Maria; "we can but repent of having erred. Your repentance is sincere, and why will you not place confidence in the mercies of the Redeemer. He knows the inmost secrets of the soul, and he pities our transgressions." Ah! mistaken fair, this language was lost upon him to whom it was uttered; he thought not of a Redeemer, or his mercies: at these periods he generally put his handkerchief to his face, as if to wipe a starting tear, but, in reality, to smile at the credulity of his Lady.

To return to our heroine and her now truly happy parents. During the time of her continuance at Pemberton Abbey, many and melting were the

scenes between Mrs. Hamilton and the dowage Lady Ellincourt; whilst she contemplated he beautiful face, she beheld the very features of the murdered Durham. "O my sainted brother!" she exclaimed, "do I indeed press to my bosom the child of my departed Emily—her whose spirit has mingled with thine, whose habitation is with the just; dear image of thy sweet mother and lamented father, how lately did I believe thee numbered with the dead, deprived, perhaps, by the cruelty of Lord Ballafyn, of life, and sent to join thy parents up on high: but thou art spared, and that fiend has payed the forfeit of his crimes." With streaming eyes, Mrs. Hamilton embraced her aunt, and eagerly participated in the blissful emotions she experienced. The mention of the sufferings which the authors of her being had sustained, were distracting to her imagination; but when she reflected on the state of supreme felicity to which there could be no doubt they had at length attained, she felt the vivifying rays of consolation inspire her with its ardent flame: restored to her adored husband, and beloved daughter, her joy was greater than it can be possible for any mortal to conceive.

CHAPTER XL.

Tête-à-Tête, and Epistolary Correspondence.

"WHAT is the leading subject of your thoughts, my dear Emily?" said the Duchess of Albemarle to Lady Ellincourt, who sat in a musing posture, viewing the countenance of our he-

roine with attention. "Is it your wish that I should tell you?" answered Emily, her features assuming her accustomed playful smile. "It would oblige me," returned her Grace. "Why then," said her Ladyship, "I was thinking of the horror and astonishment that was depicted in every face, this day ten years, when we were at Myrtle Grove, and our very honourable governess, after her interview with Lord Ellincourt, entered the room, exclaiming, with rueful looks, that she had been harbouring the daughter of a sheep-stealer in her house; and then I shall never forget how you burst into tears, and, flying to me, folded your little arms about my neck, and sobbed upon my bosom. With cruel vehemence Miss Bridewell snatched your hand, and led you from the apartment;—but what stir, what consternation did this circumstance create! 'Well,' says one young lady, 'even our wise discerning governess, Miss Bridewell, may be imposed upon; her penetration is not always exempt from deceptions, so artfully managed as this.' 'No, indeed,' said another, 'she has been finely tricked, for three years together, to spend money on the education of a girl whose father came to an ignominious end; good heavens, how disgraceful a catastrophe! I am sure, if I was Miss Bridewell, I should never be happy again, after having introduced such contamination into an establishment for young ladies of fashion.' 'Dear,' cried Lady Maria Trentham and myself, in one breath, 'how can you give credence to such vague suppositions? there must be some mistake.' 'Oh, I dare say it is too true,' answered Lady Isabella; in which remark she was joined by my haughty sister. 'What a nice sense of feeling the poor thing must have,' observed the tender-hearted Lady Maria; 'how deeply she was affected when she heard such a dreadful report surmised.' 'Pshaw! nonsense,'

replied Caroline, 'to regard the petulance of a child as a proof of fine feelings: she was frightened at the rough manner of Miss Bridewell; but as to understanding what she said, it is no such thing.' However, the event soon proved that this opinion was wrong; for the moment you returned to the school, you contradicted the rumour that had been raised, your eyes sparkling with delight, and every feature animated with joy. At that error even the proud heart of Caroline was softened, and those who had been most violent in condemning were become most zealous in applauding little Fanny, who was once more looked upon as a human being. But, my dear creature, what threw me into this contemplative strain, was the pleasing consideration of the wonder that doubtless prevails in the bosom of that lady, whom you know my Lord admires so excessively, now that you are Duchess of Albemarle; if we could behold her at this present time, what a surprising alteration we should see in her deportment; instead of the frigid stiff Miss Bridewell, she would be all complaisance, and 'Your Grace, and your Grace,' at every word." Lady Ellincourt paused. "What an explanation!" said the Duchess; "I did not expect, when I asked the nature of your thoughts, to be entertained with so long a dissertation; but I am obliged to you, my love, for the recollection of events that perhaps might have slipped my memory, had not you kindly reminded me of them." "No," answered Lady Ellincourt, "that would be impossible—to forget any thing appertaining to Miss Bridewell would be impossible; a woman possessed of such gentilizing powers, such remarkable attractions both of mind and person. Bless me, Fanny, can you talk of forgetting such super-excellence?" The Duchess smiled. "You have imbibed some of your husband's prejudices," said she. "If I have," she

replied, they are not in favor of the antiquated maid.' "No," said her Grace, "I am well acquainted with Lord Ellincourt's opinion of our amiable governante, and the Duke's coincides with his. I must own that, from what I can remember, there was nothing in her appearance or conduct to excite love, or her sister esteem." "There was a good deal to excite hatred, though," exclaimed Lord Ellincourt, who at this moment entered the room; "burn the witch, what do you couple the words love and esteem in the same breath with her for? an animal that never felt or created either. A piece of still life, because no person ever thought it worth their while to render her otherwise; a being, whose name is aversion, whose parents were contempt and indifference—her sister is scorn, and her brother disgust—a nice motley crew. I should like to see them all together—such a promising family must improve the rising generation." "As you have painted them, they undoubtedly must," cried Emily; "I think I see them now." "What mischievous creatures," said our heroine; "how you delight in railing against the poor lady!" "Ah, madam, you would say so more," answered his Lordship, "if you knew the schemes we have in contemplation." Emily put her finger to her lips; she was fearful he would betray his secret; but he knew better than to spoil the jest by such indiscreet measures. "Oh, I know you are upon something," said the Duchess. "That we are," returned his Lordship; "upon as solid ground as ever was trod." The ladies laughed; but the author of their mirth looked as grave as if he had been the bearer of the most dismal intelligence: instead of which his jocose imagination was devising a most curiously-concerted plot, to which no one but his lady was privy, for the purpose of vexing and astounding the imperious Miss Bridewell: it was to be put in execution

that very day. After some further discourse, the sprightly nobleman withdrew, to consider perhaps of the project that was already ripening to his wishes; and Lady Ellincourt gloried in the success which she felt assured would attend their enterprise. The Duchess did not in reality suspect that any private designs were meditated by them, or she would probably have opposed them. She attributed their uncommon levity to their mutual dislike of Miss Bridewell; but, willing to change the topic, she inquired, "if her sister, Mrs. Camel, was expected in England?" "Oh no," replied Lady Emily; "Caroline resides constantly at Lisbon. We had a letter from her about a month ago, and she expressed no desire to revisit her native clime." "That is singular," answered Fanny, "that she should not wish to see her family after such a lapse of years." "Not at all, my dear; she has not the ideas that you and I have; she is my sister, and I ought not to speak against her, but she has too much pride ever to be happy herself, or make any one else so." "I hope she is happy in her marriage," resumed Fanny. "Tolerably so, I believe; she makes no complaints of her consort; but the reason is obvious, he has plenty of money to support her extravagant propensity to dress; and provided she can flaunt about in her coach and six, and appear like the queen of every assembly, she considers her felicity as supreme: she sets no estimate on the social affections that characterise her sex. She never displayed much fondness for her parents, and less for me. As to her husband, they may agree well enough as the world goes—they have had no children hitherto, but are in expectation of an heir." "When she is a mother," said Fanny, "she will probably grow more domesticated." "I question it," returned Emily: "I am not a mother, and I flatter myself my ideas are as

domestic as if my genial hearth was surrounded by a company of innocent babes." "May that satisfaction at length be your's, lovely Emily!" energetically cried the Duchess. Lady Ellincourt sighed: they had been united three years, and their loves had not yet been blest with a son: this circumstance at times cast a damp over the spirits of her Ladyship. She was formed for domestic felicity, and had always been particularly attached to children: but though she would at times lament the circumstance, she was too sensible and too amiable not to be convinced, that, if it was the Divine will, she would have an offspring to share the affections of their parents. Fanny perceived that she was affected, and, tenderly putting her arm round her waist, partook of the momentary anguish she seemed to experience. "My dear Emily," said she, "wise and inscrutable are the decrees of Providence. We must submit to its ordination." "I submit, and with resignation," replied Lady Ellincourt: "yet at intervals a tear of sorrow will force its way in spite of my efforts to oppose it." Fanny mingled the kind drop of sympathy with hers, and sought to soothe her by the most consoling expressions. They at length succeeded, and she gained her usual composure. Lady Ellincourt retired to perform some of her necessary avocations, and our heroine hastened to rejoin the family below. She found her mother and the Dowager Lady Ellincourt recounting past transactions. The former had been weeping, but was now more tranquil. Fanny flew to her, and embraced her with an ardency yet stronger, if possible, than she had before done. Mrs. Hamilton returned her caresses with equal warmth: each felt the true force of their relationship, and the recollection of former sufferings rendered their present happiness the greater. This day passed on without any thing further of con-

sequence transpiring. In the evening the Duchess of Albemarle received the following letter from her friend, Lady Mornington:—

"My dear Fanny,

"I find you are still a resident at that dreary Abbey, and preferring the moping life of its inhabitants to the gay splendor of London. Bless me, my dear, you astonish me; you that are the universal ton wherever you display that angel face, to endure the very thought of spending half your time in solitary confinement;—the bare reflection is shocking. You were born to be admired, and yet you would veil your beauties from every eye. Perhaps to this observation you may answer, Why, I have gained the man of my heart, and have no more victories to seek. All very true; but shall the Duchess of Albemarle lie buried beneath a cloud, whilst Lady Mornington trips it about on 'the light fantastic toe?' I can assure your Grace that I have no inclination to conceal my astonishing perfections within a moss-grown glen, though I have not the smallest design of meeting with a conqueror that shall rival poor Sir Everard; nor, if I had, do I believe I could accomplish such a scheme; for he is really a very good sort of man, and I love him in as high a degree as my nature is capable of admitting the tender passion: he loves me with the most ardent affection; but the attachment is not sufficiently strong on either side to induce us to seclude ourselves from the world for the sake of each other. We live in the true style of *prime and bang-up*, and are no sooner seen in one place than we are present in another. Last night we saw the comedy of the Provoked Husband performed at Covent-garden Theatre. I could not forbear smiling at the aptitude of the lady's character to mine; and once I whispered to Sir Everard, 'Recollect, I am Lady Townly—now

imagine yourself my Lord, and turn tyrant all in a minute.' 'I am not such a sentimentalist as Lord Townly, my dear,' he answered, rather archly. I believe this reply was made without premeditation; but conscience perhaps made me receive it as a reproof. I blushed like crimson, and, to my inexpressible mortification, I beheld his large full eye fixed upon my countenance, as it underwent this change, which of course increased my confusion. During this discourse I lost the best part of the play; for I never hardly felt so chagrined. The circumstance, however, passed over, and I had too much prudence ever to renew it. But sometimes I am in doubt whether I shall not carry my volatility to too great lengths. Sir Everard praises my versatile powers, and says that no woman was ever a greater adept in the art of pleasing than his Amelia,—a very fine compliment, certainly; yet I will not dare to say that it is deserved. I know my defects, and likewise that many of them are unconquerable. As to sprightliness, so far from considering that a defect, I think it the only merit I possess: without a small portion of life and spirit, a woman may as well be inanimate—but that spirit may be pursued to too high a pitch. I will allow, there is not a virtue to be mentioned that may not be set too much store by. The virtues which adorn us most, though they cannot be too highly prized, will, if they lead to censoriousness, lose their brilliancy: even female chastity itself becomes like the winter's sun, which, devoid of its accustomed warmth, but dimly shines, when the possessor makes it her chief study to emblazon the errors of those whose errant feet have strayed into the enticing but peace-destroying paths of folly. Let us act as conformable to the rules of strict propriety as we can, but let us not too severely censure those who have swerved. I am now getting into a train of

reflections that but ill accord with my accustomed gaiety. I must alter my tone, or you will not be prevailed upon to credit the evidence of your eyes. Let me hear from you upon receipt of this. As soon as you are returned from Hampshire, we shall pay you a visit; though I know not how we shall support being absent from London so long as the period we appointed: I would rather see you in the latter place: you shone there whilst in the character of the lovely fatherless Fanny: now that a coronet adorns your brow, with double satisfaction should I behold you surrounded by the applauses of an admiring multitude. I hope the Duke is well; my unsentimentalist desires to be remembered to his Grace. I am, my dearest Fanny, your affectionate friend,

AMELIA MORNINGTON."

The Duchess read this letter with emotions of sincere pleasure. She was always glad to hear from Lady Mornington; but her joy was now tenfold, as she felt a conviction that the uncommon gaiety of her friend was partly giving way to nobler sentiments. She instantly took up her pen, and wrote as follows:—

"My dear Amelia,

"I no longer address the giddy Miss Stanhope, but the discerning and amiable Lady Mornington. I flatter myself, from the style of your letter, that you are preparing yourself to renounce the pleasures you would persuade me to indulge in; you seem to be getting gradually tired of superfluous vanities, and as if you could bear to stay at home one day without actually dying—this is a good omen of the future. I suppose Sir Everard begins to dislike show and noise, and as his inclinations change, so will yours—a proof that your affection is sincere. I can assure you that I lead by no

means a moping life at Pemberton Abbey; if we have not public places to frequent, we have plenty of company, and are in no want of any reasonable entertainment. For my part, I cannot call that life moping, that is spent under the roof of my beloved parents; those revered relatives that have suffered such an accumulation of sorrow, and are at length reinstated in their rights: long were they the victims of tyrannic oppression, but God in his wise justice has punished their tormentors, and rewarded them for their patience in calamity; they are the worthiest and the happiest of people, and the felicity of your Fanny is complete. The Duke is the tenderest of husbands, and the best of men. I have not one wish in the world: he gives me not an opportunity of wishing; for he generously anticipates the very shadow of a desire, and gratifies it 'ere it can be termed a wish. I hope this conduct in him will not have the effect of making me forget myself: there are such things as spoilt children, and spoilt wives, but I have no mind to be spoilt. I love to be treated with affection, and in return to be affectionate; the character of the Duke is such, that he must either be loved or hated; it is impossible to speak of him, as we may of many persons, with indifference, as—he is very well, I never heard any harm of him. So striking are his merits, that those who are advocates for virtue must immediately launch into his praise; and those who are enemies to it will probably be as violent in declaiming against him; he is liberal and humane to the afflicted; he does not merely relieve distress, but he dives into the extent of that distress, and warmly participates in the woes of the traveller: his heart and his purse are together open: the latter is often a token of ostentation; but where the former dictates it to assist in alleviating mendicity, then is gold a blessing to its owner. Oh, my

Amelia, I am sure you will join with me in asserting, that my happiness is greater than the generality of my sex, and much greater than I could ever have dared to hope for: if it is not permanent, it must be my own fault. We shall take leave of my dear parents, and our beloved friends the Ellincourts, next week, and shall expect you and Sir Everard, without fail, the following, in Hampshire. Though it is the country, I do not think you will have to complain of dulness: at least thus much will I say, whilst you enliven it with your presence, you can neither be dull yourself, or suffer us to be so. Do not disappoint by a refusal her, who, in an ecstacy of delight, styles herself, your ever affectionate,

"FRANCES ALBEMARLE."

Having finished this epistle, and folded it up, Fanny laid it in her cabinet till the morning should present her with an opportunity of dispatching it by the post. She then repaired to the supper-room; after which, the parties retired to their respective apartments; Lord Ellincourt and his lady to dream of the plot they had been planning to tease their favorite, Miss Bridewell.

CHAPTER XLI.

An Hoax.

IN the morning, the family having assembled at breakfast, the newspaper was brought in. Lord Ellincourt skimmed the cream of the week's transactions, and then turning to the side of the adver-

tisements, his eye quickly rested upon *one* that seemed to engage his attention—whether accidentally or by design, may be easily guessed. "What has your Lordship met with to divert your fancy?" asked the artful Emily. "You shall hear," answered his Lordship; and, with as grave an aspect as he could assume, he read aloud the following curious advertisement: "Wanted to place a young lady in a genteel establishment, a few miles from town, for the completion of her education. The friends of the said young lady are anxious to lodge her under the roof of a person whose character is tender and benevolent, and from whom she will receive maternal kindness, as she is in a very delicate state of health—she is seventeen. They have heard in such a favorable manner of the sensibility and kindness of Miss Bridewell, of Myrtle Grove, that they would feel themselves happy to intrust their precious charge to her care. Should this public information meet her eye, it is requested that she will be at Richmond to-morrow or Wednesday, between the hours of twelve and three; then, if the terms should suit, there will be no hesitation on the part of her family. To avoid unnecessary trouble to either party, a premium of one hundred and fifty guineas per annum will be given with the young lady, as she will require particular care and attendance. A written address will not do—an interview must be obtained with whoever wishes to accept this offer. Apply as above, at the house of Sir Thomas Hartland, Bart. M. P." "A singular advertisement," said Emily, as Lord Ellincourt finished. "Who, in the name of wonder, can have heard of her kindness and sensibility? Where can she have had the ingenuity to conceal such desirable qualities?" cried his Lordship; "I should almost imagine this was some trick, to give the old lady a journey, did I not consider that she was beneath

any body's putting themselves to the inconvenience of hoaxing her." Emily smiled, but did not reply. The Duke of Albemarle alone suspected the truth of the affair: he watched the countenance of Ellincourt, and thought it betokened him concerned in it, though he affected surprise. The Duchess, ever willing to allow merit, said, "that perhaps Miss Bridewell might have done good traits, though they had escaped their observation." They all protested they did not believe she had one, and this whimsical circumstance presently created the general mirth of the whole company: it was impossible to start any other topic during breakfast; and when the things were removed, each individual retired to perform their separate duties, musing on what had afforded them such a fund of entertainment. Here we leave them for a while, and transport the reader to *la salle des sciences*, at Myrtle Grove. After this advertisement had appeared in the papers of daily intelligence, it was pointed out to that lady by Mrs. Dawson, who had now returned from abroad, and was again living with Miss Bridewell. She had amassed a great deal of money in the lucrative situation she had embraced in Ireland; but Mrs. Odell dying suddenly, she experienced another change. She wrote to Miss Bridewell, expressing her desire to be with her as formerly, and renewing her professions of friendship: they were received with zeal, and, in the answer, the dear Dawson was requested to hasten instantly to her home; for such she was henceforth to consider it. She was reinstated in all her privileges, and her government was paid nearly as much deference to as that of the principal. When Miss Bridewell had glanced her eyes over the paragraph so highly flattering to her vanity, they sparkled with pleasure. She gave the paper into the hands of Mrs. Dawson, saying, "Read it, Dawson, I am sure you will think it an

eligible offer." She read it, and then replied, in her usual style of duplicity, "that it was likely to prove a very advantageous thing, but she did not think the money was more than ought to be given under such circumstances." Miss Bridewell declared herself satisfied with it, and resolved to set off for Richmond the next morning, and secure her pupil if possible. Thus determined, she felt her heart lighter than she had known it for some time; yet its oppression was never violent, but now and then she of course met with losses and disappointments in her school, from which no person in whatever condition is exempt. She had received on that day the remainder of the expenses owing to her from the Marquis of Petersfield—that had exhilarated her spirits: she had been apprehensive that she should never regain it, as the young ladies had left school upwards of two years: its coming unexpectedly, made it the more agreeable; and the thoughts of an additional hundred and fifty guineas, increased her good humour to such a pitch, that she scarcely resembled herself: her countenance brightened up, and a smile of placidity overspread her features. She commended the diligence of her scholars with more than ordinary warmth; in short, quite threw off the austerity inherent in her nature. The following day, a post chaise was ordered to be in readiness at an early hour, as the distance from Myrtle Grove to Richmond was nine miles. She drest herself in her most splendid robes, with a view, no doubt, of adding to her beauty; and the moment she heard the chaise drive into the great court-yard, she was down the steps, and in the vehicle. She knew, or thought she knew, that she could confide in her beloved Dawson, and she was under no uneasiness at leaving the management of her seminary to her. She directed the postillion to drive with speed to the appointed place: he obeyed her commands;

but every mile was a league in her opinion. When they arrived at Richmond, he was told to inquire for the house of Sir Thomas Hartland, for she was perfectly unacquainted with the name. The man, after asking several labouring people which was the residence of the honourable knight, at length informed Miss Bridewell, that no such person lived in the neighbourhood "No such person lives in the neighbourhood!" exclaimed she, drawing herself up with astonishment; "impossible: it is but yesterday I saw his name and address in the public paper; I am sure that it must be on the spot; I will wait in the chaise while you go and seek further: my business is of importance, and cannot be delayed." He accordingly went, and demanded of every one that seemed likely to give such intelligence, whether the said Sir Thomas Hartland was dwelling in those environs or not: nobody seemed able or willing to grant him any information on the subject—a few had never heard of the Baronet; at last, a man, habited in the garb of a peasant, said, "that about six months before, a gentleman, if he deserved that appellation, who bore the title of Sir Thomas Hartland, had resided in those quarters, but he had for ever disgraced the honour of his sex, by running away with the wife of Sir Charles Atterbury: they were now fled to America: it was a case that had called for heavy damages. Sir Thomas had forfeited twenty thousand pounds; but could that be any recompence to Sir Charles for the irreparable injury he had sustained? He was gone to France, and had engaged with the Wellington troops, hoping to forget, in the rough din of war, the tenderness of slighted affection: they had no heirs. Nor was the name of Hartland known to belong to any other person." When John returned to the chaise with this truly distressing news, the grief and amazement of Miss Bridewell may be

easier conceived than described. She looked petrified, and in hurried accents expressed her indignation at the trick that had been evidently put upon her. "To come thus far," said she, "and meet with such an imposition as this—insufferable insolence. I will find out who has dared to deceive me in such a manner, that I will," she continued, her countenance growing more infuriated. The postillion stared at her vehemence, but made no answer. At length, he was ordered to drive back to Myrtle Grove, as no expectations remained of discovering any thing further. As the chaise drew on, she had time to meditate on the serious misfortune she had encountered; for such she called every event that happened to oppose her wishes, instead of favoring them. She was doubly mortified at reflecting on the depravity of the character she was inquiring after: she felt an inward conviction that there must be some one who was her secret enemy, and wished to injure her pure fame: the thought was bitter; she reached her home in a state of mind agonizing beyond imagination. Mrs. Dawson came out to meet her: the moment she saw her face, she was sure something unpleasant had transpired. The postillion being discharged, Miss Bridewell entered the house, loudly exclaiming against the fraud that had been practised. "Dear madam, what has happened?" asked the impatient Dawson, "thus to disconcert you; you look as pale as death, and as if misery had planted its image in your heart." "Oh, you know not how I have been served," cried Miss B. in a voice trembling with rage; "I at present want words to tell you." "Stay till you are more composed," said Mrs. D. She sat down, panting for breath, and unable even to soften the weight of her cares by unburthening them to her friend. As soon as her spirits were in a degree tranquillized, she related the important affair that had so much dis-

tressed her. Mrs. D. listened in silent dismay, and affected the sincerest concern at so melancholy an incident: though she had protested to think lightly of a hundred and fifty guineas a year, she in reality thought it an estimable increase. As her attachment to Miss B. was not quite so strong as she wished her to believe, her disappointment was not so great as she expressed. She attempted to console her in a language such as she thought calculated to produce the effect she desired; at least if her condolences were inefficacious, her seeming endeavours were regarded by Miss B. as sufficient tokens of her ardent friendship: she embraced her dear Dawson, and said, "If her troubles would admit of consolation, the method she took to mitigate them must succeed; but that, alas! they were of too poignant a nature to be alleviated." Her pride was wounded—to think any one should dare to sport with her in so ludicrous a way was a matter of amaze; and who it could be that so far presumed, she was totally at a loss to conjecture. She continued raving against the deceit that had been exercised, and did not make her appearance in the school that day, as her frame was too agitated to bear the smallest fatigue: she retired early to her chamber, and Mrs. Dawson felt herself highly honored in having such implicit confidence placed in her by Miss B., though her conduct did not prove derserving of it; for she took advantage of the numerous opportunities which she had to deduct many little profits to herself, that she had no reasonable right to do. Her salary was two hundred a year: with that she might have been happy, but she was gifted with the powers of dissimulation, and knew well how to avail herself of the influence which her artful address made her gain over the generality of the world. To return to Pemberton Abbey. It was long before its inhabitants could recover from the surprise into which this event had thrown

them. "Strange," observed the Duchess, "that any one should advertise for Miss Bridewell, when they could as well go to Myrtle Grove, and obtain an interview with her." "It is mysterious," answered Lady Ellincourt; "I suppose they have particular reasons for so doing;" and changed the discourse. "We shall have a party to-day," she continued, "as you, my love, leave us next week; we expect Lord and Lady Mountmorris, Lord and Lady Newcomb, Sir Richard and Lady Palmer, and half a hundred fashionables besides. Your poor dear mother has been so shut up in that odious castle in Ireland, that the world is quite new to her; she seldom saw the face of a living creature whilst she was distinguished as Lady Ballafyn; she never saw his Lordship, except at those periods when he was pleased to lay additional restrictions on his unhappy victim: even the servants were denied access to her apartments, exclusive of those who were under his appointment." A tear started into the eye of Fanny; the repetition of the cruelties her mother had suffered, caused her heart to throb with anguish. Emily, perceiving her emotion, said, "But her sorrows are past, and her joys are yet to come." "Ah!" sighed our heroine, "but how many of those years that ought to have been devoted to love and felicity have been sacrificed to the villany of that monster." "Too true," replied Lady Ellincourt, "yet as time cannot be recalled, we must strive to banish these melancholy reflections, and only contemplate on future prospects of prosperity." To this remark her Grace assented; and now hastened to hold some private conversation with Mrs. Hamilton. When she announced that visitors were coming, that lady turned pale. "Alas!" said she, "I know not how I shall support the presence of company. I have lived so long in a state of seclusion, that I am scarcely fit to appear

before a fashionable assemblage: you, my daughter, will grace the table." "But do not weep, my dearest mother," cried Fanny, folding her arms about her in a tender embrace; "grief is fled, and bliss shall henceforth reign within these walls—you would grace any society: the friends of Lady Ellincourt are acquainted with the trials you have undergone; they will not therefore expect to see a gay and giddy woman, delighting in vain nobility, and a stranger to rational amusements: your sorrows must have already engaged their esteem, and, when they have seen you, they will doubtless become prejudiced in your favor." "You are very compassionate to my feelings, my child," replied Mrs. Hamilton; "but I fear that, instead of having engaged the esteem of the friends of my worthy aunt, they have imbibed an unfavorable opinion of me; as Lord Ballafyn took care to spread every where the report of my infidelity, and to represent my character to the world as tainted with every vice." "O, let not that consideration distress you," answered Fanny; "Lord Ballafyn was known to be a wretch, and regarded as such by every class of beings: his conduct obtained him the universal detestation of mankind; therefore his calumnies were listened to with abhorrence, and disbelieved as often as they were uttered." This suggestion seemed to infuse comfort in the breast of Mrs. Hamilton. She admitted its possibility, but doubted its probability. "Lord Ballafyn," said she, "had money, and that will pervert the consciences of mortals, and make them lean not on the side of justice, but of tyranny nd oppression. Bribery is not to be withstood by this mercenary age. Concerned am I to say, that ready instrument of guilt destroys the morals of individuals more than any thing that can be mentioned. I have been unjustly slandered; but it will be difficult to convince the world that this is

the case." "I hope you will find it easier than you imagine," said the Duchess; "your sufferings, my beloved mother, have demanded commiseration, and the exemplary manner in which you endured them, must eternally exalt you." Mrs. Hamilton kissed the cheek of her daughter. "Thou art a powerful consoler," said she; "thy words would almost persuade me that matters are as thou hast taught thyself to wish; however, I will trust in that God before whom I have asserted my innocence, and who is acquainted with the purity of my soul; to him I have confided my every care, and in him I will rely for future succour. The triumph of my enemies have ceased, as they can no longer exult over my misfortunes: they are, I trust, forgiven, and at rest." Mrs. Hamilton here wept, and Fanny mingled her tears with her's. By degrees she regained a small portion of composure. "I will," said she, "join the company, and assume as cheerful an aspect as I am capable of. If I show an unwillingness to appear, they will interpret my behaviour into something very different from the truth; and virtue never endeavours to wear the face of vice, though vice frequently adopts that of virtue." With this observation, the Duchess quitted the apartment, and went herself to prepare for the coming of the visitors.

CHAPTER XLII.

A Sketch of Characters, and Fashionable Conversation.

At length the gay party arrived. The court-yard was thronged with carriages, and Pemberton

Abbey became a scene of noise and bustle—a picture totally the reverse of what it usually was; for the Dowager Lady Ellincourt was a woman that had ever loved retirement, though her situation had obliged her to join the great world, and participate in what were termed the pleasures of the day. She had always been an admirer of nature and its beauties; consequently, when she could gain an hour's relaxation, she embraced it with transport; and before she was an occupant of Pemberton Abbey, she possessed a country-seat in Northumberland, where she frequently resided. After she came to the latter place, she seldom visited London: she was then at an age when women generally begin to be tired of routs and bustle, and prefer a life of sentimental rationality. Upon the union of her son, however, she was far from desirous of immuring them in solitude; she therefore kept a good deal of company, and by chance took a retrospect of town, as it is called. Lady Ellincourt, though less volatile than most of her sex, was naturally pleased with the amusements that appeared to be suited to the present times; and it is not to be supposed that her sprightly Lord would endure restraint; he had been spoilt when a child, therefore could not bear the smallest control as a man. To proceed, it is necessary we should give a faint insight into the characters of the persons invited on this occasion. Lord Mountmorris was about fifty, he still retained a commanding air and expressive countenance, his mind was truly noble, as the succeeding pages will prove, and his disposition, such as few can boast. He was married, unfortunately married, to one of the vilest termagants that ever existed; she was scarcely eighteen, and beautiful as an angel; under every exterior attraction that nature could bestow, she concealed a heart more treacherous than a serpent's. She had imposed on

the best of men, by an outward appearance of goodness, and too effectually secured him for her prey. They had been united but six months, and reason already had he to curse the day that made him a slave to her fascinations. He had known Lady Ellincourt many years, and had been the sincere friend of her husband: she was the only person that he could venture to advise with, or to unbosom his grief to.

When, in the fulness of his joy, he informed her that he was going to lead to the altar his amiable and adored Miss Rivers, she said, "Mountmorris, I wish you truly happy, but I am afraid you will be miserable." She had heard of the gaiety and dissipation of Miss Rivers, and she was too disinterested to flatter with hopes of bliss, where she thought the cloud of wretchedness was impending; she was concerned for his Lordship, and he was almost angry with Lady Ellincourt for suggesting an idea, however remote, that might in the least prejudice him against his intended bride. Too soon, however, he found she was right: he had been deceived, most cruelly deceived; dearly did he pay for beauty and accomplishments: she embittered every moment of his life, nor did he know the extent of his injuries, as he was not of a jealous temper. She had an intriguing spirit; in short, to number her vices, would occupy a larger space than the limits of this chapter would allow. When he imparted his sorrows to the benevolent Lady Ellincourt, she commiserated them with feelings of anguish, such as greatness dignified as her's could not fail to have for the friend she esteemed. She felt for his affliction; but, wishing to preserve his acquaintance, she was obliged to be on terms of civility with his lady, though in her heart she despised her. They were often invited to Pemberton Abbey, and as often the conduct of

Lady M. created increased disgust in the breast of Lady Ellincourt. We hastily pass on to the other guests. Lord Newcomb was what is called a man of the world; he was a first-rate jockey, and a famous hunter; he had married on the common fashionable views of interest, and, as he neither cared for his lady, nor she for him, they were very well matched: little therefore can be said of them. Sir Richard Palmer was an avowed libertine, and a hard drinker, consequently a tyrant of a husband; Lady Palmer was the most amiable of women. Thus unequally are the sexes united. No wonder that such ill-assorted nuptials produce discordant strife. When hearts are paired at Hymen's temple, then may happiness reign; but where hands alone do meet, farewell to happiness for ever. Sir Richard was, likewise, what is termed a freethinker; in plain words, an Atheist. He did not hesitate to profane the most sacred writings; whenever the subject of religion was started, he suffered his wit to flow at the expense of hazarding an eternal forfeiture of God's favor. It may appear singular, that such a character should have been encouraged as a visitor at the table of Lady Ellincourt; but it was the love she bore to Lady Palmer, while bearing the name of Miss Hargrave, that induced her to keep up an intercourse with a wretch so abandoned as Sir Richard. She had repeatedly attempted to argue with him on his want of tenderness for his deserving partner, and prevail upon him to abstain from the unlawful pleasures in which he was wont to indulge; but her rhetoric was thrown away; he acknowledged the worth and excellence of Lady P., but declared that the passion of variety was so strong, that he found it impossible to resist the warmth of his inclinations. He had been accustomed to set no limits to his inordinate desires; and, as to virtue,

he had been taught to consider it as an object of ridicule. In this manner he answered the kind remonstrances of Lady Ellincourt; and his indifference and hatred of his wife became every day more obvious: she was doomed to suffer, but she suffered innocently. Of the remainder of the visitors, few observations can be made. Sir Anthony Dale, a gentleman of philosophic genius and deep reflection; he was a bachelor, not because his person was disagreeable, or his manners forbidding, for neither were the case: he had every requisite that could please the other sex, but he had no heart to bestow. He was so much attached to his schemes of speculation, that he had always fancied a wife would be an incumbrance, and therefore determined to live free. He possessed such traits of goodness as ever recommended him to the society of the wise: there was an austerity in his deportment, which had the effect of creating him many enemies; but it was those whose acquaintance with him was slight, and who were, perhaps, too much prejudiced against him to seek to discover the inestimable qualities with which his nature was replete. Where he was known, he was esteemed and beloved. As a son, he followed the example of that great and inestimable poet, Pope—as a friend, he was constant—as a companion, lively and spirited—in conversation a wit, yet cautious how and where he directed his satire—refined from the company he kept, and the studies he was engaged in—to women he was always polite, never gallant—he was generous without ostentation—and brave without being a warrior. The next in our list was Captain Townsend; he had distinguished himself in his military career, and was certainly a brave officer; and he was always extolling the courage of the General under whom he served. The last we shall speak of in this place, is Dr

Woodward, the minister of the parish, who, I must not omit stating, conferred honour on his cloth. He was religious, without being a bigot; his ideas were not confined, as are those of many of the clergy. True religion never has the effect of making people dull; it, on the contrary, infuses cheerfulness in every breast. It is only false professors that are rendered phlegmatic and miserable, by what they misinterpret into piety, but what is in reality hypocrisy; there can be no religion without morality, and moral reflections inspire adoration for the Great Creator. If we adore him and all his works, why should our contemplations be melancholy? If we view him as a stern and remorseless judge, that is deaf to the voice of our complaints, who has barred our progress to heaven, and has consigned us to perdition, then may we repine at Providence, and murmur at our fate; but if we esteem him as a beneficent God, fraught with holiness, and rich in mercy, our meditations will abound in sublimity; we shall no longer indulge in gloom, but elevate our thoughts to praise his name divine. Of this description was the Rev. Dr. Woodward. He was universally respected by his poor parishioners—would that I could add, by his rich ones; but, as he devoted half his income to acts of charity, the very means that raised him in the opinion of the former, lowered him in that of the latter; at least, though they were obliged to acknowledge his claim to esteem, they hated him with an inveterate rancour. Vice is generally averse to virtue: they had thousands, and refused to spare a small portion to alleviate the distresses of their fellow-creatures; they could therefore not bear the reflection, that Dr. Woodward, with a third part of their fortunes, should spend it in such nobler pursuits. Conscience reproached them, as it will do at every error we commit; however we may strive to banish

that unwelcome guest, it sticks close, and never quits us. We must now drop these subjects, and convey the reader to the table of Lady Ellincourt, where the visitors were now assembled. When the Duchess of Albemarle entered the room, she was of course greeted with unanimous applause; every tongue congratulated her on her auspicious nuptials: she returned their salutations with becoming dignity and ease. "Give me leave," said Lady Mountmorris, in her usual affected style, "to wish your Grace many years of uninterrupted happiness." "I am obliged to your Ladyship," answered the Duchess, "nor do I despair of the felicity you so kindly invoke." Fanny was struck with the surprising beauty of this lady; yet there was something in her aspect so expressive of the vixen, that it was impossible for her charms to make that impression as if they had been tempered with a look of modesty and innocence. Her eyes were of a dark hazel, remarkably handsome, but full of wildness and savage fire; her complexion outvied the lily and the rose; her form was irresistibly attracting: yet, amidst all these personal requisites, neither her air or address were desirable. She seemed proud, conceited, and self-sufficient. When Mrs. Hamilton appeared, she was received by some of the guests with respect and courtesy; by others, with civility and distant hauteur: a few perhaps maintained the former behaviour from her being the mother of the Duchess, and a few from very different motives. Lord Mountmorris, Sir Anthony Dale, and the excellent Dr. Woodward, knew her worth, and could feel for injured virtue. Lady M. preserved a coolness in her deportment, and conversed with Mrs. Hamilton as little as possible; but Lady Palmer paid her particular attention: she had herself experienced unhappiness, which made her more inclined to compassionate others. During

dinner, the conversation turned on the usual fashionable topics. Lord Newcomb began a dissertation on his favourite theme, horse-racing. "I vow and protest," said he, "that only last week I won a thousand guineas by the dexterity of Sir Nicholas Blanchard, as fine and as fleet an animal as ever trod the turf—am I not a lucky dog?" "I think you are," returned Sir Richard. "If it is not an impertinent question," said Dr. Woodward, "may I ask whether your Lordship appropriated part of that sum to the benefit of the poor?" His Lordship started at this query, as if he had been struck with a flash of lightning. "Why—no," at length he replied; "I can always find uses for my money." "I do not doubt it, my Lord; but you cannot find a more eligible use than in contributing to the comforts of the necessitous; the approbation of your own heart, and the blessings of the poor, will always attend you for acting so agreeably to its dictates." "Pshaw!" answered Lord Newcomb, "I don't like moralizing." The worthy minister would of course have said no more, but Sir Richard Palmer proceeded: "Self-approbation, sir! I scarcely know what it means." "Consult your conscience, Sir Richard, when you have done a worthy or benevolent action, and that will best inform you." A sarcastic smile was his reply. "There are some people, I believe," cried the blunt Sir Anthony Dale, "that never partake of the enjoyment self-approbation affords; they scorn to do a deed of justice, much less of charity; therefore, it is not to be wondered at that they are ignorant of the terms." Sir Richard looked haughtily at Sir Anthony, as he concluded this remark; but the latter was too much the philosopher to notice or to care for his dis-esteem. "I think we should vary this subject," said Lady Mountmorris; "'' grows tedious." The expressive glance of her

eyes, as she spoke, did not escape the notice of Sir Richard; and as those of the company were directed another way, he had an opportunity of returning the sense they conveyed: they both pretty well understood each other. Capt. Townsend now entered upon the state of the country, and the happy result of the late glorious war. Sir Anthony begged leave to differ from him in opinion. "I do not think," said he, "that the result of the war, or the peace, has been productive of the effects we had so fondly anticipated." "How," exclaimed the captain, "pray explain yourself." "Why," replied Sir Anthony, "was there ever greater wickedness practised than at this present day? Does not the world seem arrived at a pitch of vice too great for human endurance?" "It does; but can your philosophy, Sir Anthony, prove to me, that the increase of crime is owing to the national peace?" "Not exactly," replied Sir Anthony; "for peace is the only situation in which a nation can exist happy and virtuous: but it is evident, to the most superficial observer, that the transition from war to peace has suddenly increased crime. Nay, Captain, reserve your smile till I conclude. I am no advocate for war, and although I have said that the transition from one state to another was the producing cause of the overflowing of vice, yet, as I have often asserted before, I consider war in the first instance its generating principle. In every populous nation, and particularly a manufacturing one, when the inhabitants, for the better managing of their concerns, are obliged to form towns on an extended scale, there will, until Christianity more vitally plants itself, be found men of dissolute habits, and on the breaking out of war, the well-disposed will do all in their power to send those characters to the army. You cannot, Captain, from the time you have spent in the

service, but have observed this; you also well know, that those vile characters soon contaminate the simple country lad, and lead him on in the ways of vice, till he becomes more an adept in licentiousness than his instructor; and those men, freed from the restraints of military discipline, rush upon the community, and spread, by their evil example, immorality and irreligion to our most remote and sequestered villages. It is a point argued by some, that war is not to be avoided: this I deny generally, though, except in case of actual invasion, I cannot see why a nation ought to engage in the murderous employment. War is condemned by Christianity, and, therefore, incompatible with its profession. Peace, though now the apparent cause, will, I am certain, in time, remedy those evils which war, and its concomitant, taxation, has brought upon us."

The Captain was far from convinced by his arguments; he was one of those opiniated mortals, that if he formed a judgment he could never be prevailed on to alter it; he did not, even for the sake of good manners, affect to acquiesce in the sentiments of others. So fond was he of opposition, that he seldom coincided, though they chanced to agree with his own. Sir Anthony did not pursue the discourse, and it soon changed; his conversation was chiefly directed to Lord Mountmorris and Dr. Woodward; those three gentlemen seemed mutually pleased with each other. Sir Richard Palmer, at intervals, surveyed the Doctor with looks of mingled contempt and dislike: his being a clergyman was enough to make him hated by a man of his dissolute principles; had he been at any other table than Lady Ellincourt's, he would probably have shook off the mask of outward decorum, and vowed openly to insult the worthy divine; but in her presence, and before such distinguished characters as she enter-

tained, he was obliged to preserve an air of respect. Earl Vincent was a nobleman remarkable for boasting of his genealogy. At every assembly he regularly presented the company with an account of his pedigree. He was descended from a branch of the Northumberlands, and could trace back his family to several generations. He was upwards of eighty; but as vain of his nobility as a youth just acquainted with his pedigree Thus do we continue in a labyrinth of folly til death surprises us with his iron dart, and, 'ere we are apprised of his near approach, wings our course to the regions of eternity. This gentleman conversed with much freedom; and, if he had said less of himself, his society would have been more agreeable.

Lady Mountmorris looked and behaved as if she believed herself the superior of every body; and whatever subject was started by her Lord, she pointedly expressed herself averse to, and introduced something else. But when Sir Richard Palmer spoke, she listened with evident avidity, and joined in his opinion. Had he been less a libertine, he could scarcely have resisted such conduct as she displayed: as it was, he marked her for an easy bait. Oh, woman, woman! beware how you treat with contempt the husband of your choice. If you would escape the snares of a seducer, behave to him with respect and attention. A man will seldom dare to insult a female, by a mention of his unlawful passion, who shows affection and reverence for her husband. He will be too certain of meeting with a refusal to hazard such a pique to his vanity; and the dread of having his character exposed, may likewise, in a measure, prevent him. A single view of Lady Mountmorris would have informed any person of the smallest penetration, that little persuasion was necessary to accomplish her ruin. There was no danger, how-

ever, of Sir Richard depriving her of her reputation, as it had long been sacrificed. She was also so imprudent as to speak with scorn of people in years, though Lord Mountmorris was past the prime of life, and several others were present who were considerably advanced. This was not merely an essential breach of politeness, but it clearly evinced that her Ladyship was divested of those natural feelings of humanity and decency, which every age and sex should cherish. Yet need we wonder, if a woman can so far forget herself and dignity to accompany a man to the sacred altar, who adores her to distraction, who relies upon her faith and tenderness, and rests his future hopes of happiness on her love, with the base design of rendering him miserable; and, not content with injuring him in the nicest point, insults him in public, instead of endeavouring to conceal her aversion? Can we, I repeat, be surprised at any thing we hear of her? She has disgraced herself as a wife, and for ever bid adieu to fame.

The dinner being ended, the ladies retired, and the gentlemen were left more at liberty to indulge themselves. But women, lovely women, being absent, their party soon became dull, and, upon the suggestion of Lord Ellincourt, they joined the ladies, who were admiring the delightful view which presented itself to their enraptured sight, from the noble Venetian window of the spacious saloon to which they had retired. After admiring it for some time, they adjourned to the drawing-room, and music, both vocal and instrumental, began to engage the attention of the party.

Lady Mountmorris was requested to play a tune, and accompany it with her voice. She immediately declined it, stating, as an excuse, that her nerves were affected. "Do, my dear Charlotte," said Lord Mountmorris, "oblige the company with one tune; I am sure your compliance

will give them inexpressible satisfaction." "Indeed, my Lord, I am not well, and singing is a great fatigue." He looked displeased and disappointed; though, alas! this circumstance was not new, as she invariably thwarted his wishes. At this moment, Sir Richard Palmer rose up, and said, "You cannot conceive, madam, the distress into which your refusal has thrown us all. My Lord," turning to her husband, "you must persuade her to yield to our entreaties." "Lady Mountmorris must pursue her inclinations," said his Lordship, gravely. Sir Richard, however, would not let the subject drop, and at his repeated solicitations the Lady consented to what she had disdained when requested by others of the party. This event was naturally calculated to inspire Lord Mountmorris and the innocent Lady Palmer with jealousy, though that was a passion they never encouraged; but when errors so palpable are committed in the presence of the injured, it is impossible for them to be blind. The preference of Lady Mountmorris to Sir Richard was already obvious, though they had never met till this occasion; and the guilty pair were preparing to inflict fresh daggers in the hearts of the most deserving of their sex. Their behaviour was remarked by every one; and all, whose breasts were not steeled to compassion, commiserated the amiable victims of depraved libertinism. The day was spent in the manner that has been described, and in the evening cards were introduced. Our wise philosopher and the pious Dr. Woodward chose to converse, instead of joining in the games. Lord Ellincourt played very deep; he had not yet conquered his love of gambling. The Duke of Albemarle took one turn at chess, and then joined Sir Anthony. He was no friend to play. Lady Mountmorris asked Lady Palmer, if she would play with her at cribbage: that Lady refused. She was labouring

under great mental uneasiness, and her attachment to cards was not strong enough to afford any solace to her cares. Neither did the fanciful smile of Lady Mountmorris, when putting the question, weaken the indifferent opinion she had formed of her goodness. "I have a rival," inwardly sighed she; "this fascinating female has alienated the slight remains of affection which my husband entertained for me. Oh, that he had not been invited to this mansion." Lady Mountmorris pretended to be chagrined, but in reality was rejoiced, as it gave her an excuse for joining in a game with Sir Richard, who gallantly made her the offer. The brow of Lord Mountmorris was clouded; he walked to the window to conceal his disorder. At length, finding an opportunity of speaking privately to the Dowager Lady Ellincourt, he unburthened his griefs to her in a few words: "Oh, madam," said he, "I am distracted; I must sue for a separation from Lady Mountmorris; I cannot exist in the manner I do," and his eyes swam with tears. "I pity you," said the Dowager Lady Ellincourt, "truly pity you; but how is it possible for me to advise you. I plainly see how you are circumstanced, and I must not express my sentiments. I would comfort you, if I could." He grasped her hand, thanked her for her kindness, but still begged her to explain "what she would do, if she was situated as he was?" "I cannot tell," replied her Ladyship; "it is difficult to decide upon the question, but let me see you again shortly, when I am free from intruders, and we will talk upon the subject, though it is a painful one, that I could wish might be for ever banished. Oh, Mountmorris, would that thou hadst never married." "Would so, indeed," he cried, "I had escaped the worst of evils; if I had not been ensnared by beauty and a vain shew of accomplishments, I had not been the miserable wretch you now behold me.

But the deed is past, irrevocably past: the priest hath joined our hands, and happiness and we are for ever divided." Lady Ellincourt was much affected at the solemnity of his countenance, and the grief that was portrayed in every lineament of his still-handsome face; the majesty of his air, and dignity of his deportment, added to the impression his sufferings made in the breast of Lady Ellincourt. She could only sympathise in his affliction—only did I say, is it not the great est consolation to a wounded heart that a fellow-mortal participates in its sorrows. If we cannot dispel the load of anxiety, we may at least soften its heavy weight, and render it more supportable. They now returned to the company, Lord Mountmorris having promised to wait upon her Ladyship the next morning. Some of the gentlemen had retired to the billiard-room; but Sir Richard was still playing at cribbage with Lady Mountmorris. "We must prepare to depart, madam," said he, "the night is far advanced," casting a stern glance at Sir Richard. "You are a hurrying creature," said her Ladyship. Perceiving Lady Palmer, however, as if wishing to speak to her husband, she arose, and moved towards her Lord: "It is distressing," she resumed, "to leave these worthy friends. I have been so happy here, that I should like to become a resident at Pemberton Abbey." Lord Ellincourt, who was at the farther end of the room, talking to the Duke of Albemarle, overheard these words. "God forbid she should be a resident here," whispered he; "it would be hell instead of heaven to be compelled to live with her." Sir Richard answered, "Your departure, madam, will be sensibly regretted by us all." Lord Mountmorris was pressed to lengthen his stay, but he refused, and he and his lady departed; the former with the esteem and commiseration of the whole party; the

latter with united detestation. Sir Richard next ordered his carriage to the door. Lady Palmer and Mrs. Hamilton took a very pathetic leave: though upon so slender an acquaintance, they seemed to own each other as kindred souls, and to have contracted an indissoluble friendship. The Duchess of Albemarle likewise felt the sincerest compassion for this unfortunate lady, whom she was fully convinced was miserable with Sir Richard. The rest of the visitors soon dispersed, and the peaceful inhabitants of Pemberton Abbey were once more left to the quiet possession of their beloved domain.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Affecting Interview, and Explanation of the Hoax.

The fatigue which Lady Ellincourt had sustained throughout the day, made her impatient to retire to rest; indeed, none of the family were accustomed to such late hours, it being past midnight when Pemberton Abbey was restored to tranquillity. The next morning the conversation turned, as may be imagined, on the various characters of the late guests. They all joined in execrating that of Sir Richard Palmer, and the worthless Lady Mountmorris. The Duchess of Albemarle loudly exclaimed against the conduct of the latter, giving it as her opinion, that women who acted so, were the seducers instead of the seduced. The Duke acquiesced in the observation. Mr. Hamilton remarked, "that the lady's face was not unknown to

him; he had seen her at public places while Miss Rivers, and was sure she was reckoned a woman of intrigue." "So young," exclaimed Lady Emily, "and yet so artful." "Her youth and beauty," said Lord Ellincourt, "rendered her schemes doubly certain of success. She wished not to retrieve her character, for that she knew was unattainable; but she had too great a knowledge of the world, not to foresee, that, as Lady Mountmorris, if she disgraced her husband and herself twenty times a day, she would be caressed as the most perfect of her sex. But, as Miss Rivers, if she made one deviation, her reputation was blasted for ever." "True, too true," answered the Duke; "if a young female derogates in the least from the paths of virtue, though ten thousand reasons may be brought forward to extenuate her fault, who is single, and perhaps unprotected, she is condemned at once, declared an abandoned creature, and excluded from the society of the fashionable —virtuous they term themselves: but let her be a married woman, and, of consequence, her frailties will be unheeded, and herself regarded as the mirror of excellence. I know this to be a fact, as I have lived a sufficient time to comment on the manners of the great, and in my researches I have found daily occasion to confirm instead of altering my opinion. Lady Mountmorris, I dare say, is received every where with applause, and her errors are effaced in the bright attractions of a lovely exterior: this proves that persons are valued according to their rank, not merit." "It does, indeed," replied the Dowager Lady E.; "and I will appeal to the truth of your assertions, as circumstances, very similar in their nature to those attendant on the case of Lady M., have come under my own *ocular demonstration*." She then acquainted them with his Lordship's private conversation with her, and the affliction that was pic-

tured in his expressive countenance. When she mentioned his determination to gain a divorce—"I hope," said the Duke, "he will embrace that measure speedily; if he delays, she will probably have obtained a separation by a more dishonorable method, and his grief will then be stronger; but if they part by consent before she inflicts further disgrace on herself and him, though her dishonour will be equal, the shame will rest less on his name, than if she eloped while still with her husband." "I expect a visit from Lord M. this morning," resumed her Ladyship; "he has requested my advice, though, alas! I am incapable of offering any; but I have long known him, and he seems to derive a melancholy satisfaction from being condoled with in his misfortunes." Mrs. Hamilton spoke in high terms of admiration of the amiable Lady Palmer, lamenting that she was not united to an object who would prize her worth as it deserved. "I thought," observed the Duchess, "the moment I beheld Sir Richard, that he was a wretch; his looks betokened the villain: he is handsome, and may be reckoned agreeable, but there is an appearance of depravity in his air that rendered him forbidding in my eyes at a single glance: and when I perceived him inattentive and negligent to his beautiful wife, I was then convinced of what I had before suspected." "Her charms," said the Duke, "are of a very different nature from Lady M's.; the latter is, I dare say, called the most attracting, because simplicity and innocence are no longer fashionable; but I think Lady Palmer far the most desirable." A servant now entered, to acquaint Lady Ellincourt that Lord Mountmorris was arrived: she immediately rose, and descended to a small parlour, where his Lordship was waiting. When she entered, she was struck with the deep dejection of his counte-

nance, and the almost fearful wildness of his eyes; he advanced to meet her, but seemed unable to utter a word. She entreated him to sit down, and endeavour to compose himself.—"Compose," said he, at length; "yes, I hope I shall soon be composed; they say that peace is in the grave, and I am fast hastening thither." "Perhaps peace may yet be reserved for you on earth," replied Lady Ellincourt. He shook his head. "Never," answered he; "tranquillity and I have taken farewell." After a lapse of some minutes, he proceeded: "I come, madam, to ask your advice, yet fear that I may be unable to take it. I have expostulated warmly with Lady M. on the impropriety of her conduct, and have insisted upon having an explanation of her behaviour; she refuses to assign any reason for her indifference, but hints at the disparity of our years. 'You had eyes, and chose me, madam,' I returned. 'No, my Lord,' said she, 'I was *your* choice; but you are the last object I should have selected, had I been left to my own free will. I started at this remark; 'Your own free will!' I cried; 'I do not understand you—you was under no control that ever I heard. Your parents had long been consigned to the silent tomb, and your fortune was independent of every one; how therefore could you be constrained to marry me?' She looked confused, and was silent. I requested an answer. 'What means this lecture, my Lord?' imperiously she exclaimed; 'I am sure, if you repent your bargain, I do, as heartily.' 'I do, indeed, repent it,' said I; 'for your sake and my own—sincerely I repent it.' 'For my sake!' she contemptuously answered. 'Yes, madam, for your sake; our unhappy union has been productive of wretchedness to us both.' 'Have I not been the best of wives?' she continued: 'is there any thing that your Lordship

can lay to my charge?' As I did not instantly reply, she went on. 'As you, my Lord, have insisted upon an explanation of my conduct, I in return must insist upon knowing of what I am accused: I will never seek to justify myself till acquainted with my fault.' 'This candour,' said I, 'pleases me; if you would hold an argument upon subjects, we should have fewer disputes; I will be equally generous with you. I do not accuse you of faults, but follies: I allow for the little gaities of youth—it is not to be supposed that eighteen will conform to the caprices of fifty—yet, where a man has loved with the passionate ardour that I have—have, did I say? O Charlotte! I would love you still—where he has resigned himself to your charms, and disdained your sex for you alone, surely such an affection demanded a return. You must acknowledge that your behaviour yesterday was imprudent to a degree; you discovered no deference to my opinions, you despised my attentions; and forgive me if I declare, that your too visible partiality for Sir Richard Palmer excited jealousy in my breast; my apprehensions I hope were groundless, but yourself gave rise to them.' I paused. 'Sir Richard Palmer!' said she, 'a married man; is it possible, my Lord, you can harbour suspicions so injurious to his honour, and my reputation?' 'His honor, madam, has long been forfeited: your's, I trust, will ever remain unsullied.' 'And yet you are trying to asperse it,' she uttered, in a sarcastic tone. 'No,' said I, 'I am wishing to clear it from aspersion; but the world will make their comments, and I fear your absurdity, to give it no harsher term, has exposed you to its severest censure.' 'I do not care; I defy the tongue of slander; I am justified in my own eyes, and it is of little consequence what the world dares to think or say of me.' This arro-

gance increased my ire to an amazing height; I confess I never was so enraged before—but consider, dear madam, the provocation I received, and whether it was in the nature of man to preserve his temper amidst such degrading treatment." "I am only surprised," said Lady Ellincourt, "that you preserved it so long." He resumed—"I started up, inflamed with anger, and exclaiming, 'It is well, madam, I shall now take the necessary measures; and was about to leave the room, but she prevented me. 'Stay, my Lord,' she said, 'you are too hasty.' 'Of what avail is it,' answered I, 'for me to stay; you are indifferent as to my estimation, and regardless of your fame; therefore it is requisite, for the happiness of both parties, that a separation should immediately take place.' She looked amazed. 'Why this perplexity,' said I, 'you neither love nor esteem me: I would not desire the former sentiment unaccompanied by the latter; for which reason, as you have rendered yourself unworthy of my esteem, I must for ever cease to love you; I shall always pray for your felicity, but from this day we are disunited.' She seemed a little affected. I had never seen her evince any appearance of feeling till this moment: it almost unmanned my resolution; but, recovering myself, I was again retiring from the apartment, when, turning my head, I perceived she was as pale as death, and as if fainting. So moving a sight quickly disarmed my resentment; I flew to her, took her hand, and, placing her in a chair, held volatile liniments to her nose; she was apparently insensible of my solicitude. I called her by the most endearing appellations: at length, she pretended to revive—I say pretended, madam, as you will presently be informed of the deception she had practised. She cast her languid eyes upon me. 'I thought you had forsaken me,'

said she. 'And would it give you concern?' I cried. She answered in the affirmative. I cannot describe the contending passions that assailed my breast at this declaration; I pressed her hand to my lips, and vowed that she was still most dear to my soul. 'Oh, Mountmorris,' she sighed, 'I own that I have done wrong, that I am very, very reprehensible.' I caught the delightful sounds, and, enraptured, clasped her to my bosom, pronouncing her the joy and solace of my future life. This moment was to me one of the happiest I had ever experienced: I felt a renewal of the sweet sensations that had occupied my heart on the day that yielded her to my arms; but transitory was the bliss—her perfidy was discovered by a most singular circumstance. A little box, which in her alarm she had neglected properly to secure, dropped from her person, and revealed to me her base dissimulation; its contents were white paint, a small portion of which she had dexterously spread upon her cheeks, which entirely faded her complexion, and gave her a most death-like aspect. She had easily contrived to adopt this expedient to excite my commiseration, when I had rose, intending to quit the room, and she then affected to swoon away, as already stated. At this proof of her deception, I could not contain my fury within any bounds, save those of personal vengeance. I did not attempt any injury to her, but, withdrawing her from my fond embrace, I vehemently protested, that she was the vilest of her sex, and that I must have been a madman to have been duped by her insidious wiles; and, without waiting for a reply, I darted from the apartment and the house, when I instantly hastened hither, to communicate my sorrows to your Ladyship, and consult with you how I ought to proceed."

Lord Mountmorris here stopped, and a flood of

tears came to his relief. Lady Ellincourt did not interrupt them; she was sensible that their influence was most salutary to a mind opprest as his. He wept a considerable time, and then, raising his despondent eyes to those of her ladyship, implored her to direct him how to act. "My dear friend," mournfully replied she, "to abide by my directions were, perhaps, to be farther rendered miserable. I, a weak woman, am inadequate to the task of offering advice; yet, as you so earnestly request my opinion, I will give that, without presuming to advise. I hope, for your sake, that the honour of Lady M. has not yet been sacrificed; but I fear that she is determined on destruction, and will shortly become the victim of dissipation. Would you be separated from her in a legal way, you will immediately pursue the necessary methods for that purpose; yet be not swayed by any thing I say. I have esteemed you, Mountmorris, when in prosperity; I doubly respect you in adversity, and grieved am I that you should have made so unworthy a choice; but, alas, it is difficult to discern the merits of one, whom we design as a partner through life. During the period of courtship, both men and women conceal their evil propensities; and, if they have any virtuous ones, display them; if not, they falsely assume the appearance of some, and if they have any skill at all, they find it but too easy to deceive their vassalled slaves, till at last the noose is drawn, the veil is thrown aside, and too often repentance treads close upon the heels of matrimony." "You have read the book of the world, madam," said his lordship; "your sentiments are too just. I have proved it in myself. I had not been united two days before I had reason to repent; though I was a victim to such beauty, that it was long before I could persuade myself I could be otherwise than happy with a creature so divinely fair.

But oh! mistaken wretch that I was, to imagine that external qualifications could constitute the felicity of mortals when unallied to goodness. Her charms, blooming as they were, soon lost their power of pleasing. She sought not to please. Wrapt up in fatal security, she blindly fancied that the heart which had once been her's, must ever remain in her possession, let her conduct be what it would. She was not deceived in thinking I loved her, madam; I did, with an ardour almost unequalled: I believed her the peerless daughter of the graces; and, when I pressed my suit, so far from stating an objection to my years, she seemed not to consider it as one, but to surrender me her affections entire: it is the more cruel, therefore, to allude to that circumstance now. She has nearly alienated every particle of that tenderness which once reigned in this constant heart—I will not say utterly, as the recent proof I have given, of a remains of attachment, evinces that I have not wholly conquered my former love; but I will endeavour to banish past impressions, and, with them, the object who occasioned them. I will return to Lady M., and strive to gain her consent to a lawful divorce. I do not wish to dispute with her, nor cause her any uneasiness; her fortune is ample; it is her's, and I shall settle an additional annuity upon her. I value not money; it is empty and imaginary good; its attainments are superficial, as are also those of beauty; and when the mind is lost, all other acquisitions might as well be forfeited." After some further conversation, Lord Mountmorris departed, having determined with Lady Ellincourt to commence a judicial process respecting the affair in question. "If Lady M. refuses her compliance, I must proceed without obtaining it," said he; "but I would rather she would give her sanction to the measure." She begged to hear from him

shortly, and with a melancholy mien he took his leave.

When Lady Ellincourt returned to the apartment where she had left the family, she found her son laughing immoderately. "My risibility, madam," said he, "arises, not from the sufferings of your friend, whose case we all deplore, but from an explication of a very curious riddle, that has proved such a puzzle to your ladyship, in fact, to all but the worthy authors of it." Lady Ellincourt looked at his lordship, and at the rest, in amazement. "Here is the cause of our unwonted mirth," said he, presenting her with the newspaper. The reader will, perhaps, guess at the meaning of all this. It will be recollected that Miss Bridewell expressed her resolution to discover who had made her the object of their sport, and she communicated her design to several of her friends. Some of them dissuaded her from her purpose, saying they thought it would be useless to attempt any thing of the kind; others, advised her to pursue it; the latter plan was most consonant to her inclinations. She accordingly addressed a letter to the editor of the paper in which the advertisement appeared, stating the circumstances, enclosing the advertisement that had occasioned her so much consternation, which she had copied and printed, and likewise another of her own composing, requesting to be acquainted with the author of the former, and offering fifty guineas reward to whoever could give the information she required. Here was a development at once of the mischievous frolic that had been played by Lord Ellincourt. "I suspected you," said the Duke, "from the first; I knew you was an arch rogue, and that you had an unconquerable aversion to the old gipsey; however, she has thrown away time and expense by this advertisement, as she will not be a wit the wiser for it."

"No," said Lord Ellincourt, "I am sure nobody can claim the fifty guineas, as the matter is a secret to all but ourselves:" and here ended the joke.

The Dowager Lady Ellincourt now entered upon the subject of her discourse with Lord Mountmorris, and brought tears into the eyes of all present, by her description of his sorrows, and the remorseless conduct of his tyrannical lady. "It is well she is not my wife," cried Lord Ellincourt; by heavens she would soon repent of her tyranny, if she displayed it to me." "Take care how you behave, Lady Ellincourt," said the Duke of Albemarle; "you see you have not the tamest of mortals to deal with." "When I act like Lady M.," said Emily, smiling, "I shall not expect to meet tameness. I think it is astonishing that he can have borne with her for six months; though that to speak of is a short period, it is a great while to be made miserable." "It is indeed," replied the Dowager Lady Ellincourt; "but I believe he is determined to endure it no longer; he seems fixed in his resolution of obtaining a separation, and that speedily." This resolve receiving the universal applause of every individual, the parties shortly retired from the breakfast-room, to perform their usual avocations.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Acts of Charity.—Return to Darby-House.—Arrival of Company, and lively Discourse.

The remainder of the week passed on without any thing of importance occurring, and early in the

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DARBY HOUSE

following one, the Duke and Duchess took leave of dear Pemberton Abbey and its beloved inhabitants. The parting between our heroine and her amiable mother was very affecting. The Ellincourts would have persuaded them to continue longer in their society; but they were desirous of returning to Darby-House, Hampshire, where their presence was anxiously expected by the surrounding gentry. They did not, however, depart without receiving the blessings of the neighbouring poor, to whom they displayed many acts of generosity. The Duchess made it the greater part of her mornings employ to seek into the distresses of the hapless indigent; and the affability with which she listened to the sad story of their woes, and immediately presented them, like a beneficent angel, with the assistance they required, derived her the love and esteem of every virtuous heart. The Duke turned his head to the establishment of Public Institutions; but not like some other persons in a yet higher sphere than the Duke of Albemarle, who grant their patronage to the support of national charities for the sake of a name, when a private petition would be rejected with scorn; he promoted the welfare of every individual, and never turned a deaf ear to the voice of complaint. As soon as he got back to his country-seat, he erected an asylum for the aged, and those who were infirm: when one of this description applied for relief to him, they were dismissed with a guinea, and informed, that there they would find a refuge if they were willing to go in: how readily and how gratefully they embraced this offer may be imagined. It is here also necessary to observe, that Lord Ellincourt did many benevolent actions; he was the founder of a building for orphan children, and likewise for decayed tradesmen, who had been reduced by misfortunes to a state of penury; he was universally

respected and adored; and he was rewarded for the numerous estimable qualities he possessed by every signal favor that heaven could bestow. To add to his felicity, his lady's appearance was such as to betoken the day not far distant when to the duties of wife that of a mother would be added—an event that contributed to the happiness of both parties. Our lovely Fanny was in the same hopeful situation; both looked forward to the prospect of future heirs with inexpressible delight. The Duke and Duchess had been settled about two days in their favourite retreat, when their lively friend Lady Mornington and her husband arrived, to pay their promised visit: the meeting between the amiable Amelia and her Grace was tender and affectionate—they warmly embraced each other, and a series of congratulations took place. Sir Everard complimented the Duke on his nuptials; and his Grace in return wished him joy with the fair creature he had selected for his bride. "I thank you heartily," said Sir Everard, "and glad am I to my soul that you rejected one another, as I should have lost an incomparable prize." "I always admired Miss Stanhope," answered the Duke, "and, doubtless, had not my affections been engaged to Fanny, she would have secured the victory; but for a great while, as you know, I was induced to believe that my beloved was actually Miss Stanhope." "Yes," replied Sir Everard, smiling, "my Amelia acted her part bravely; she is versed in dissimulation; I shall always glory in her art, however, as to it I am indebted for the possession of the most invaluable of treasures." Lady Mornington meanwhile gave the Duchess an account of what she had seen in London, and how much she had lamented that she was not present to behold them. "I have witnessed enough of them, my dear," answered Fanny, "and do not in the least

regret my absence from riot and noise." "You are of a happy disposition," said Amelia, "and I have at periods thought that I was; but I fear I should soon grow melancholy, if I was to live entirely out of the world, having been always accustomed to gay assemblages. When I pass an antiquated abbey or church, rendered desolate by the impairing hand of time, a sensation of awe seems to thrill through my bosom. Were I to indulge my feelings on such occasions, I should be as spiritless as one of the marble statues they contain. I fly with avidity from such places, and hasten to scenes more congenial to my nature; but your gravity, I warrant, could endure the idea of spending two or three hours in such solitary spots, and yet be free from the vapours." "It could endure not merely the idea, but the act," replied Fanny. "I prefer surveying the monuments in Westminster Abbey, to seeing all the plays in England." "What a barbarous taste," cried her friend; "I protest I never heard one of your sex and age make such a declaration before." "Possibly not, my dear; yet I can assure you it is the simple truth." "Well," said Lady Mornington, "when I propose to write a tragedy, I will take example by our wise Shakspearian bard, who made a point of walking in the dreary cloisters, that his mind might be turned to horrors rare. At present I have no such intention. We have nearly completed the work I informed you we were employed in, and, before we send it to the press, you shall enjoy the gratification of perusing it; I long for your opinion on its merits." Amelia was only in jest, as she had never designed to write such a book as she had described, though her imagination was sufficiently exuberant to have furnished her with ample powers for the accomplishment of her undertaking; but her sportive fancy, and copious flow of wit, enabled her to play off upon some of

her acquaintances without being detected. Not so with the Duchess of Albemarle; she quickly penetrated the veil the little hypocrite wore, and affected not to be deceived. "I really thought," said she, "from your last letter, that you was becoming a rational creature." "Lord bless you!" exclaimed Amelia, "did you suppose I could be completely rational all in a minute? no, no, I shall grow so by degrees, to be sure. Such sudden transitions would inevitably destroy my health." Our heroine smiled. She was irresistibly charmed with the conversation of this sprightly female, though sometimes her flightiness seemed carried, in her opinion, too far; yet there was such an innate goodness blended with her youthful eccentricities, that it was impossible to help loving and esteeming her. "Oh, I know we shall not be dull here," continued her ladyship; "this mansion, though it is situated in the country, is exquisitely beautiful, and the gardens are delightfully pleasant. I expect great satisfaction from promenading them." The Duchess now led her friend into the different apartments, and strove to divert her by introducing all her curiosities to her notice. She was in raptures with every thing she saw, and complimented the taste of the inhabitants of Darby House in terms of the highest warmth. The library in particular engaged her attention; the order in which the books were arranged set them off to inimitable advantage: they were placed methodically in rows. The works of sublime and sentimental authors composed the greatest part. History, ancient, modern, and natural, were widely diffused through the whole. A few select novels, and some of the best plays, made up the collection. Lady Mornington was extremely fond of reading, though her immoderate desire of rambling had prevented her from resigning herself to so sweet an enjoyment long enough to enter fully into

the spirit of the writers she perused. She had hitherto only skimmed first into one volume, and then into another: but she intended, when tired of seeing the same thing over again, which she acknowledged might one day be the case, to give her mind to nobler attainments. "I shall begin the laborious task while I am with you," said she, "and then I shall be able to judge whether I could pursue it." "You will not find it so difficult as you imagine, I trust," returned Fanny; "you have a natural love for learning, and you will find here a choice variety that will both amuse and improve." Amelia took hold of one, on the back of which was beautifully lettered, 'Tasso's Jerusalem.' "It would tempt one to read your books, Fanny, to look at these elegant bindings." "The inside of that valuable work is more precious than its binding," said the Duchess, with unwonted energy of expression. "I have only scanned a page here and there," answered Amelia, "and I think the language very fine: but what have women to do with war? Peace is the female province." "True," said Lady Albemarle, "yet women may like to hear of what they have no concern in. For my part, I could pore over the beauties of this divine author, till the gates of my eyes closed with languor or fatigue, its fiction is so gloriously energetic, and every line breathes harmony. I have seldom participated in the pleasures of metrical composition to so high a degree as when meditating on the perfections of this god-like book." "Your praises," said Lady Mornington, "have inspired me with a curiosity to go through the whole. I think I shall indulge it. Recollect, I am at home here—I shall not consider myself a visitor under the roof with my Fanny." "I should be very sorry if you did," interrupted the Duchess; "I detest formality, and from Lady Mornington it would be insufferable." "Sir Everard is no formal-

ist, I can assure you," cried Amelia; "he holds with the observation of the celebrated Lord Chesterfield, who affirms, 'that true and dignified politeness is ease and freedom.' What is generally called by that name, is merely an affectation of the term. He was an advocate for the graces, and no man ever practised them more strenuously; but as to a parcel of constrained airs, such as were and are adopted by most of those who are denominated the fashionable world, he was a professed enemy to them; and Sir Everard admires all he says. Now I do not tell you," she continued, with an arch smile, "that the poor man is capable of copying the manners of Lord Chesterfield; but I think if he could acquire the task, it would be the utmost height of his ambition. He reveres his character, and respects his principles; but his understanding——" "Hush, my dear Amelia," hastily exclaimed the Duchess, "I will not hear you ridicule your husband." "Pshaw," said Amelia, "you know I am only in fun; I would die to promote the happiness of Sir Everard; but I must have my joke, like Mr. Pope, though I lose my friend." "You have mentioned a very comfortable way to promote his happiness," answered Fanny; "you had better have reversed it, and said, you would live for ever with that intent." "Oh, I hope I shall not survive Sir Everard; I could not bear to be a widow." "We must all bear what the Almighty pleases to inflict," said Fanny, "and that with resignation. However, I trust you will both long be spared, to make each other happy." The fervour with which these words were uttered, brought tears into the eyes of the susceptible Amelia. Her feelings were strong; and persons who are naturally of a lively spirited disposition, are generally endued with finer feelings than those of a calm uniform temper. The former are soon elated, and as soon discouraged; but they never

yield to despair: they act according to the influence of the moment, and experience either the extremes of bliss or wretchedness. When reflection comes to their aid, their native sense directs them to moderate these extravagant sallies, and they commonly succeed: but the latter, who are perfectly luke-warm, live and die without partaking of the pleasures that attend either love or friendship; they are seldom overjoyed with the gifts of Fortune, but too often suffer their spirits to be totally depressed. When the fickle goddess disdains to smile upon them, the former may be violent, but soon the storm of grief blows over, and hope begins to dawn: the latter encourage not the bright sensation, but give themselves up to a fatal despondency, and are very frequently the people who are urged by their melancholy habit to a deed of desperation. The reason is obvious. They ruminate on nothing but the dark side of the picture, and refuse the consolations that religion would afford. Rarely do we hear of a person committing suicide whose passions were strong and ardent. It is those who ponder on their misfortunes, and forget there is a merciful God that can deliver them from affliction, who resolve to abandon themselves to the power of satanic darkness.

To return to our subject.—Amelia, the gay Amelia, kissed and wept upon the bosom of her friend. "I have feeling," she said, "and thou hast awakened it." At this moment the door opened, and the Duke and Sir Everard entered; the latter, seeing his wife in tears, rushed to her, and tenderly inquired the cause. She ingenuously explained the conversation that had passed, preparatory to the words of the Duchess, that had caused the emotion he beheld. "Amen to her sweet prayer," cried he, in raptures. "And do you weep, Amelia, because her Grace implored the

Divine goodness to bestow long life and happiness upon us?" "No," answered Lady Mornington, affectionately embracing Sir Everard, "my tears are those of joy." "Nought else shall here be shed," exclaimed the Duke; "for peace doth reign within these walls." He then saluted his lovely Fanny. "I have been shewing Sir Everard, my dear, all the grounds, and he is wonderfully pleased with the picturesque prospect." "And I have been diverting Amelia, by taking her all over the house, I believe. The library, however, seems to have fixed her attention. I have done wrong to bring her here, for now we shall have less of her company." "Oh no, indeed you are mistaken," said the sprightly dame, "I shall only take the liberty of reading at those times when you are employed in the affairs of your family. As to Sir Everard, he regularly shoots for a couple of hours every morning, and when I am not disposed to attend him, you will permit me to amuse myself here." "Is your Grace fond of shooting?" asked Sir Everard. "No," he replied; "it is a sport I have always thought cruel, and therefore never participated in." Sir Everard looked disappointed. "I would do any thing to oblige you, my dear friend," continued the Duke, "save rebelling against my conscience: I can never be reconciled to the destruction of what is the work of an Almighty hand: his righteous fiat created every thing that is created, and he alone is empowered to destroy." Sir Everard did not, with many others, spurn at religion, and despise its professors: though he adhered to the pleasures of the age, his character was not tainted by any odious vice. He listened to the argument held by the Duke, and acknowledged the justice of it, but could not consent to lay aside his favourite pastime. "What is a crime in one man," said he, "is not in another: with your present sentiments

upon it, you would be very reprehensible were you to be prevailed on to engage in it. I may, upon reflection, become a convert to your opinion; but hitherto I have considered shooting as an innocent entertainment. The fault lies in persisting in what our own heart dictates to us is wrong." "Your observation is good," answered the Duke, "and proves you not a stranger to theory." The conversation here closed. Sir Everard went out on his usual excursion, and his Lady sat down to peruse some of the works that were so highly recommended to her notice. The Duke had a little business abroad; and the Duchess, as her friend was so well employed, took her customary round to visit her sick and distressed neighbours.

CHAPTER XLV.

An Adventure.—True Benevolence evinced in the issue of it; and Reflections on Goodness, proving, on experience, Charity to be its own Reward.

As she was returning from her charitable ramble, her steps were arrested by sounds of distress. She listened; they seemed to proceed from a child; she turned towards the spot, and presently perceived a little girl, about ten years of age, sitting on a step, weeping in the bitterness of mental anguish: she humanely advanced, and, regarding the hapless innocent with an expression of kind commiseration, requested to be informed the nature of her grief. "Oh, madam," said the poor girl,

looking in the face of the Duchess, "deep indeed is the measure of my woe." "Speak, oh speak," cried our heroine, impatiently; "reveal to me your sorrows, and, if human assistance can avail, they shall be relieved." She then delivered the following artless tale: "My mother, madam, resides in yonder cottage," pointing to a small thatched hut at a little distance; "my father was a shoemaker, but unhappily meeting with losses in his business, he became a bankrupt. He was an honest man," continued she, "and would have paid if he could; but he was inevitably ruined; every thing went to wreck, and all his dependance was upon a gentleman who had known him in better days, and felt for his misfortunes. With a yearly allowance from this generous man, he retired with my dear mother and myself, who was their only surviving child, to the cottage you now behold. We could exist, though scantily, and for a great while my father, who had been respected for his integrity of principle, obtained a little employment now and then, which helped us; but at last he fell sick—this was an additional calamity. To add to our distress, our quarter's payment was due, and it came not at the usual time: we were fearful of offending our benefactor by noticing the delay, yet, under such circumstances, what could we do? My mother, in our agony of mind, wrote a few lines, briefly explaining my father's illness, and the affliction we were all in, humbly entreating his pardon for the liberty she took, and begged to hear from him speedily. Soon, too soon, she received an answer; but not from himself; our amiable protector and friend was no more. His brother, oh! how different a character, wrote in the most inhuman manner, acquainting us that the folly and extravagance of his relation had long been gradually reducing him to a state of beggary, and that, in a fit of despair, he had shot

nmsent. 'Think not,' continued the unfeeling wretch, 'that I will add another fool to the number of my unfortunate family. My brother owed his ruin to his ridiculous liberality; I owe my prosperity to my love of parsimony; I can, therefore, do nothing in your case, and I insist upon never being teased by the objects of my deceased relative's bounty.' I cannot describe, madam, the agonizing grief that pierced our souls at this dreadful information: my father in a dying state, and destitute of every necessary, his end was accelerated by the awful tidings; he expired in two days after it arrived, imploring Heaven to preserve his wife and child. Alas! what is farther to befal us, I know not. We expect a jail to be our fate. We have been punctual in our payments to the landlord till the last quarter, when we had it not to pay; he is inexorable, and declares that he shall seize immediately: my father must be buried by the parish, and that is hard; but, God rest his soul, he is as happy as if interred with funeral pomp: it is my mother I am grieved for now, his trials are I hope at an end, but she has yet to suffer." Agathor, that was the little girl's name, paused. The Duchess was charmed with the simplicity of her language, and moved to tears by her pathetic story. "Conduct me to your mother, my dear," said she; "I will alleviate her sorrows, if it is possible." She instantly led the way, and her countenance brightened up with a ray of hope. When they entered the miserable hovel, the poor woman was sitting by a rough oak-table, her face bathed in tears, and looking the melancholy image of despondency. On perceiving her daughter accompanied by a lady of such extraordinary beauty and elegant appearance, she started in astonishment from her seat. "Do not be alarmed, my good woman," said the Duchess, in a tone of gentleness, peculiar to herself, "I have heard from

this innocent the calamities you endure, and it is, I trust, in my power to soften their heavy weight; here is a trifle for the present," presenting her with ten guineas; "in the course of the day I will do more for you." The grateful creature, overpowered with her feelings, was going to throw herself at the feet of her benefactress, but she prevented her. "View me," said she; "I am a woman, created in the same mould with yourself; because Providence has made me rich, shall I exact submissions such as these. No, it is a duty incumbent upon mortals to assist each other, and I rejoice that the goodness of the Eternal has directed me to this abode of wretchedness: cheer up, my friend, confide in the Divine mercy, and your reward will be everlasting." "Oh, may God of heaven bless you," sobbed Mrs. Pierce, courtesying respectfully; "the prayers of the poor will ever be offered up for your eternal welfare; but, dear and noble lady, let me know to whom I am indebted for this support." "I am the Duchess of Albemarle," modestly replied her Grace. This intelligence created no amazement, as her air and dignified deportment were sufficient indications of her quality. "You have saved my poor child and myself from perishing by famine," cried she, "and I would thank you if I could, but I have no words to express my sentiments of gratitude." "You have already sufficiently expressed them," she returned; "I have only done what we all should do, and I desire you will consider me, not as the Duchess of Albemarle, but as a friend, who sincerely compassionates your woes." Mrs. Pierce could only say, "Heaven bless your Grace." And the Duchess, as she departed, kissed her hand to the object of her mild beneficence: thus did the manner of her conferring an obligation enhance its value. She returned to Darby-House, contemplating on the

scene of affliction she had witnessed, and medi tating on the graciousness of that God who had endued her with a heart to pity, and the power to relieve distress. Sir Everard and the Duke were examining some admirable portraits, in an apartment set aside for paintings and particular curiosities. Lady Mornington was still in the library; as soon as she heard the voice of her friend, she hastened to meet her. "My dear Fanny," said she, "I am quite in raptures with your favourite Tasso. I never perused him with attention before, or I could not fail to have been charmed; he has inspired me with the true spirit of poetry. But you have been crying; what is the matter, my love?" The Duchess recounted to her the adventures she had met with; and Amelia, the tender-hearted Amelia, ever ready to administer to the wants of the sufferer, instantly pulled out her purse, from which she took forty guineas, saying, "she was sure Sir Everard would contribute farther to the assistance of the poor woman." As the gentlemen were engaged, they walked into the gardens, and there admired the beauteous face of nature. Amelia was delighted with the choice assortment of flowers that ornamented the beautiful paths; and, as she surveyed the long majestic groves of trees, which formed a lovely avenue to the house, she acknowledged that felicity might be found in verdant plains and rural bowers. "This retreat," said she, entering an arbour, whose closing shade was an invitation to repose within, "is surely the habitation of the muses; it cannot be the work of terrestrial beings. The voice of nature speaks throughout the whole, and says, I created thee." Fanny, in astonishment, exclaimed, "And is it possible that the charms of this sweet delusion can at once have made so deep an impression on your mind?" "It is both possible and probable," returned Lady Mornington; "I can assure you

that, in my present frame, and I do not think it will materially alter, I could be content to live for ever in glorious solitude, and ne'er behold the face of London more." "Scarcely can I credit what I hear you yourself declare," answered the Duchess, "as three hours have not yet performed their revolution since you avowed your dislike to the country, and professed your admiration of the town." "True," replied the fair one; "but hasty impressions prove oftener more indelible than those contracted on reflection and by experience: this may appear a syllogism to you, yet it is just. I am not merely alluding to the present topic of our discourse, though there it will hold good; but in affairs where the heart is concerned, as love or friendship, I could convince you that the first influence of those passions on our souls will ever in a degree reign predominant. We may, for prudent reasons, endeavour to restrain its ascendancy, but it will be difficult to efface its overpowering heat. When I first saw Sir Everard Mornington, I felt sensations I cannot describe; I did not then know that they were the origin of a tender passion, but they increased, even with thinking of him; and when he revealed the nature of his sentiments in my favor, the pleasure with which I listened to the soft tale was a sufficient evidence that I loved. Yes, my Fanny, I loved Sir Everard, and perhaps I was not so backward in declaring it as some prudish things of my sex. I have no notion of women concealing their predilection till the last moment; but indeed they could not, if their feelings were as strong as mine: if they really dislike their suitor, let them dismiss him at once; if not, why such affectation and nonsensical caprice." "I must allow the force of your arguments," said the Duchess, "and perhaps strengthen them by what I am going to advance. At my first introduction to the Duke

of Albemarle, if I had not imagined him the intended husband of my friend, I should probably have been smitten with the fascinations of his person and address; but that consideration, together with the supposition that I was his inferior in rank, made me on my guard against admitting sentiments that would be injurious to my honour and happiness. I saw his merit, and was surprised that you should be indifferent to such perfections. Had I known your heart had been engaged, I should no longer have wondered at your obstinacy."

"The Duke certainly possessed every claim to my esteem," answered Lady Mornington, "but love I was a stranger to till Sir Everard secured the victory. He was the great, the mighty conqueror, that was to reign triumphant o'er this heart." "And there may he ever reign," cried Fanny, "as firmly as the Duke does here." "I hope he will," replied Amelia: "they are both deserving of our tenderest affections; and happy, happy are the unions founded on motives such as ours." Having here concluded their observations, and walked once more round the gardens, they entered the house. The Duke and Sir Everard were in the parlour, waiting their approach. "You will be sorry, Sir Everard," said Amelia, "that you have brought me here; for I shall now be as solicitous to go down to your country-seat as I have hitherto been desirous of remaining in London. I am in absolute ecstacies with this mansion, and yet more so with the gardens that surround it." "You are altered, indeed, my dear," smilingly answered Sir Everard; "but what will you say when I affirm that I am as much so. I have acquired as strong a distaste for busy life as I before was prejudiced in favour of it; and, what is still more astonishing, I have resolved to relinquish the pleasures of shooting and the chase. I

have taken my leave of them to day. You may well look surprised, but I assure you it is the truth. I have killed one brace of pheasants this morning, though, I must own, not without reluctance; and I have since pondered on the words of the Duke, till I am nearly of his opinion. Do not, therefore, my beloved, regret our coming here, as it has wrought so happy a change in us both." "I do not regret it, indeed," answered Amelia; "I was only fearful that you would." She then mentioned the event of the morning, and the sum she designed to contribute to the relief of the opprest female. He warmly applauded her intention, and he and the Duke added another fifty pounds, making, in all, a hundred. This they instantly dispatched by a servant; the Duchess sending a message, that she would visit her cottage the next day. When he came back, he gave such an account of the grateful joy with which the poor soul was overwhelmed, as quite penetrated the bosoms of her amiable benefactors. During dinner, the conversation was principally on the subject. They all concurred in declaring and believing, that charity was its own reward. "There cannot be a clearer proof of this last assertion," argued the Duke, "than the blissful sensations which the performance of a benevolent action causes to arise in the human breast. Every heart, that is really invested with the feelings of humanity, must have tasted these pleasurable emotions. It is not the ostentatious satisfaction of being loaded with thanks, that I mean. No, it is the internal approbation of the soul, that is higher, and far more exquisitely gratifying than all the encomiums that can be heaped upon us; and those alone can experience it, who do good, not because they have the pattern of it in another, but, taking example by our sacred Redeemer, act agreeably to the dictates of a pure and uncontа-

minated conscience. When this is the case, that ever-powerful monitor fails not to inform us; and it is likewise pleasing to behold the heart-felt joy of the individuals we snatch from ruin's speedy brink. To have the blessings of the virtuous poor is far more to be coveted than the false caresses of the rich, who only praise us for too nearly resembling themselves." "True, indeed," answered Sir Everard; "and never did I listen to a moral discourse with such deep interest as I do to your's. Your language is consistent with the rules of reason; and reason is a being that seems discarded from the minds of the generality of the world." "Reason is not required at the card-table," said Lady Mornington, "and that is the fashionable resort now for both sexes." "I am amazed," replied the Duchess, "that people can be so infatuated with a love of play. For my part, I think it a dull unmeaning amusement; and, instead of beguiling an hour, serves to render it more tedious." "I like a game very well, by chance," answered Amelia, "but I should be sorry to devote half my time to it, as many do, who despise nobler employments. The folly consists, in my opinion, in the abuse of them, more than in the cards themselves." "Your ideas correspond with mine, madam," said the Duke. "There are many things that are harmless in themselves, which are rendered criminal by being subverted to evil purposes. Novels, for instance, are a kind of reading universally in vogue, and I have nothing to offer against them. Numbers of them abound in morality, and contain sentiments worthy to be imbibed; yet, I believe, I may safely assert, that they have corrupted the morals of more than they have improved. The reason may be easily conjectured. The fault is not in the author, but in the peruser. If people are determined to reject every thing else, and spend whole days and years

in the studying of what a few hours would suffice to make them acquainted with, it is not to be wondered at, that they produce in such the most pernicious effects. Where they read them as a sort of pastime, and by way of choosing variety, without their natures are depraved, these productions will never injure them. So it is with cards. Not that I design to place them upon a level with any kind of books; for I think them far less rational than the most frivolous and unimportant. At the same time, were they only made use of as the diversion of an hour, and not with views of gaming, they might be perfectly inoffensive. As it is, they are the root of every vice; and farewell to the happiness of those who indulge in them to excess." "I never played for any large sum," said Sir Everard, "and always made up my mind to lose, as I knew the chance on which it depended. But, I must acknowledge, I have felt greater satisfaction in bestowing a trifle on this distrest unhappy woman, than ever I did in winning a prize. The latter success I was indebted to fortune for obtaining; but the former, Goodness inspired me with a desire to promote the welfare of a fellow-creature; and the action has rewarded itself, which verifies the truth of your Grace's observation." "It certainly does," replied the Duke; "and every heart that is guided by motives pure and systematical, must feel the inward estimation I have described."

Dinner was now concluded, and the remainder of the day was spent in talking over family topics. Thus had a few hours made entire converts of the blooming Lady Mornington, and the once gay husband. They had been gradually yielding to he power of reason and reflection, and may at ength be denominated, beings not unacquainted with the charms of sentimentality.

CHAPTER XLVI.

Visit to the Cottage, and Dreadful Catastrophe.

EARLY the following morning, the Duchess went, as she had promised, to visit the cottage of Mrs. Pierce. Agathor beheld her approach, and ran, with streaming eyes, to meet and bless the saviour of herself and parent. The Duchess kindly took her hand, and, begging her not to weep, led her into the hut. To describe the scene that ensued between her grateful parent and our amiable heroine, would be a task inadequate to perform. Upon the latter desiring her to restrain her thanks, she said, "Would you, madam, deprive me of the only means by which I can support my weight of obligation. Were not my overcharged heart to pour forth the weak effusions of my humble gratitude, it must burst asunder. Your Grace's benevolence has preserved my poor dear husband from being interred by the parish. I shall now be able to lay him comfortable in the ground, and that is a greater consolation to my soul, than the thought of any personal benefit. We once, madam, lived in credit; but misfortunes overtook us. Such misfortunes as we are all liable to meet with. With pleasure, however, I can state, that they did not originate in our own imprudence. This reflection brought a gleam of satisfaction to the mind of my deceased husband, even in his departing moments. His conscience had nothing to reproach him with; therefore he died happier than many a prince, who has closed his existence beneath a gilded canopy of state, and

with his bed surrounded by nurses and physicians. He had nothing to tranquillize his exhausted frame, but that inward serenity which none can feel, save those who act uprightly. He injured no one—he oppressed no one—and he is gone, I hope, to the regions of the blest." Mrs. Pierce here wept a torrent of tears to the memory of him, who was beyond the reach of hearing them. The Duchess tenderly sympathised in her affliction. Seeing Agathor weeping in melancholy silence, she said, "You have a good little girl; she, I hope, will be a comfort to you." "She is, indeed, my only remaining comfort," sighed Mrs. Pierce. "She is a dutiful child, and possesses sensibility above her years. Kiss me, my Agathor." She ran to her mother, and folding her arms about her neck, embraced her with true affection. Her endearments were returned by her sorrowing parent with maternal warmth. The heart of the Duchess bounded with mournful transport at this affecting scene. It rejoiced her to perceive the love that reigned in the bosoms of this poor but worthy woman, and her innocent child. Internally she observed, there are stronger feelings in a cottage than in a palace. The latter banish every sensation that could give them pain. The former encourage the exquisite acuteness of their anguish, at least, in so high a degree, as to render them deserving of being ranked amongst reasonable mortals. Who, oh! who, would aspire to riches and a title, to be divested of every natural, every refined sentiment! Amiable Fanny! how few can boast of a mind elevated as thine. Had all, with an equal share of power, the same exalted inclinations, what a benevolent globe should we reside on. Instead of the excessive penury we daily behold, indigence would be generally relieved; and the great people would leave a name not of infamy, but of honour. Their characters

would be held up to posterity as worthy of everlasting perpetuation; and their bright example would be followed by succeeding generations. But, what do I say? The world is for itself—God is for us all. He preserves us, but we protect not one another. To proceed.—The Duchess staid some little time conversing with the objects of her bounty; and at length left them overpowered with her goodness. Having visited her other dependants with her usual beneficence, she returned to Darby-House. There, alas! her spirits were doomed to receive a considerable shock. A letter awaited her arrival, from her unfortunate and most unhappy friend, Lady Maria Ballafyn, late Ross. It was sealed with black wax. Trembling with impatience and alarm, she opened it. Its terrible contents were as follows:—

"My beloved Fanny,

"I am distracted—Lord Ballafyn has committed the rash act of suicide; he has for a length of time been relapsing into all his former vices. I was deceived in imagining him reformed; but, oh, Fanny, little did I think he meditated self-destruction. On Tuesday afternoon, he had been treating me with more cruelty and indifference than he was accustomed to do, and at last, upon my venturing mildly to expostulate with him, he rushed frantically up stairs, and presently I heard the report of a pistol. I flew towards the fatal spot; but it was too late to prevent the awe-inspiring deed, or save the guilty perpetrator from its dreadful consequences: he was stretched on the ground, in the agonies of death. The noise of the pistol had alarmed the house, and the servants were in a moment in the apartment. I assisted them in endeavouring to raise him—he was sensible. 'Leave me, Maria,' sa'd he, 'I desire not your presence; you can only be come to load

me with upbraidings, and in this moment of extremity they may be spared.' 'Oh, how wrong a judgment you have formed of your unhappy wife,' cried I, in an agony too great to be described: Indeed, indeed, my Lord, you are mistaken. I hoped to save a life that ever was and ever will be dear to me.' He looked at me wildly, and then said, 'And does my Maria speak to me in accents such as these? Dear inspired excellence, how deeply I have wronged thee! Oh, mercy, heaven! Mercy, did I say? Mercy, on a wretch like me! The murderer of a brother! and, lastly, the murderer of myself!' He was by this time put to bed, and medical aid had arrived. Three gentlemen of the faculty were called in, and they all gave it as their opinion, that twenty-four hours would decide the patient's fate: they faintly intimated that it might be favourable, but forbade us to expect that it would. They recommended that he should be kept perfectly quiet, as the least agitation would increase his danger. Several shots had lodged in his left side: these it was impossible at present to extract, as he was in a raging fever. I watched by his bed-side with unceasing attention: he called me his guardian angel, and implored me to supplicate the Most High in his behalf. He shewed no symptoms of delirium, but maintained his senses to the very last. 'Do you really forgive me?' said he, pressing my hand to his burning lips. 'Yes,' I returned, 'as God is my eternal witness, I forgive thee.' 'I confess,' he continued, 'that I have been the destroyer of thy felicity; that I am the most wicked of creatures.' 'No,' I replied, 'not so: you are at least wakened to a conviction of your errors; and the Saviour, who shed the grand atoning work of grace, will, I trust, have mercy on your transgressions, and receive you to his courts above.' 'Oh! cease Maria,' said my dying Lord, 'to

encourage me with hopes it would be presumptuous to entertain. I have sinned too far to be an object of interest with the Lord. I have infamously defied his power, and I dare not even pray for pardon.' At this moment a clergyman came to converse with him, who had been sent for by his own desire. I offered to retire, but my Lord requested me to stay and join in prayer with the worthy divine: this I did most fervently. He prayed for upwards of two hours with true devotion, and he seemed at length to have derived comfort from the consolations that were offered by the excellent Dr. Woodward; for that was the name of the reverend gentleman. After he had left him he grew more composed, and talked very rationally on the subject of death—a state to which he was so near hastening. 'I would live a little longer to repent,' he cried; 'but it cannot be. I feel that my end draws nigh; I have limited the period of my days, and taken the almighty power into my hands.' He then fell into a slumber; but it was far from refreshing; his dreams were disturbed and uneasy. As soon as he awoke, he called for me. I had not quitted the room, but was withdrawn to a farther part. I was instantly at his side. 'My dear Maria,' said he, 'can you support this scene of melancholy; you that have been so unaccustomed to such mournful images of horror?' 'Oh, are you better?' I exclaimed, in a voice of agony. 'Better,' answered he, 'no, I am much worse; I can hardly endure the pain I suffer: but it will not be of much longer duration; that is to say, my present tortures—the future I am unacquainted with.' 'I hope the present will be all,' I replied. 'I would fain hope so too,' he ejaculated; 'but I dare not expect it, for I am very wicked. My brother's blood calls aloud for vengeance, and it must be satisfied.' I strove to console him, by representing 'that his brother's

guilt was equal to his; that he had not wantonly planned the method of his dissolution, but had placed his own life in danger, in engaging in a duel.' 'This is true,' he returned, 'and I felt exasperated against him; but I should have considered the ties of consanguinity, and not have imbrued my hands in a brother's blood. I sent him out of the world unprepared to meet the Sovereign Judge. His crimes were black as mine, save in this last sad instance. He had time allowed him for repentance; and oh! may that repentance have availed him in the sight of his Maker; may his sins be obliterated before him, and his soul have received admission into his sacred kingdom.' He was now so faint, he could not proceed. After this period, he held no regular discourse, but spoke a few words at intervals. He expired in less than twenty-four hours from the time of the direful disaster, his hand clenched in mine, and calling on the name of Jesus. Here was indeed an awful scene. Lord Ballafyn, in the prime of life, cut off in a moment, by violent measures; dreadful to state—his own executioner. Pity me, dearest Fanny. But what do I ask? Need I doubt your commiseration? I know your tenderness of heart. I loved Lord Ballafyn; cruel as he has behaved to me, I loved him; but I could have supported his loss with resignation, had it happened under any other auspices; as it is, I can scarcely endure my weight of grief. Unite your prayers with mine for his eternal repose: his contrition was great, and God's justice surpasseth all understanding. In a state bordering on mental distraction, I style myself,

Your truly affectionate,

But most afflicted Friend,

MARIA BALLAFYN.

The Duchess had nearly swooned, as she perused this dreadful letter. "Good God!" exclaimed she, "pity thee, yes, dear Maria, companion of my early infancy, I do indeed pity thy calamity! Unfortunate fair, to have fixed thy affections on such a wretch." When she communicated the sad catastrophe to the Duke, and to the humane Sir Everard and his lady, they were inexpressibly shocked. Every heart compassionated the gentle Maria, whose amiable virtues shone conspicuous on every occasion. And despicable as was the character of Lord Ballafyn, now that his career was over, his sufferings called forth the tear of anguish: he had repented his enormities, though when too late to amend; and even the last action of his guilty life, he had been spared long enough after its commission, to evince the sincerity of his penitence; for which reason we hope he is forgiven by the Creator he so highly offended. The Duchess, after the first violent emotions of her mind had subsided, took up her pen to write an answer to her friend. She condoled with her in the most soothing language she could devise, assured her of her continued love and esteem, and implored her to direct all her thoughts to the grand Disposer of events; Him, who could alone console her in her afflictions. She mentioned her knowledge of Dr. Woodward, and described him as the most amiable of men; concluding by once more entreating her to confide in the goodness of Infinite Wisdom. Her letter was a cordial to the drooping soul of the opprest Lady Ballafyn. She kissed and wept over this testimony of ardent affection. "Oh," said she, "that I had never exchanged the name of Trentham for that of Ross; I had now been in the enjoyment of felicity, and perhaps my husband living; for, if he had never married me, he might have escaped the rock of dissipation into which he plunged. His heart was

never mine, though his hand was proffered at the altar; but I was weak enough to believe in the sincerity of his protestations of attachment. Happy in the imagined possession of his love, too readily I consented to become his wife. I should not so hastily have disposed of myself."

Such were the melancholy reflections of the dejected Lady Ballafyn. Her mother, the Marchioness of Petersfield, as soon as she heard the dismal tidings, hastened to her sorrowing daughter. The presence of her parent had been ever gratifying—it was peculiarly so at this moment. From whom could she hope for consolation so effectually, as from the force of maternal affection? The Marchioness was a woman of exquisite sensibility, and possessed most acute sensations. It was long 'ere either of them could utter a word; but continued to weep upon the bosoms of each other. At length Lady Maria strove to express the satisfaction at beholding her mother. The Marchioness spoke the language of comfort to her tortured breast, and she succeeded in restoring her to a degree of composure.

We leave them, and return to Darby-House. This unhappy event threw a damp even over the spirits of the sprightly Amelia. Though unacquainted with Lady Ballafyn, she largely participated in her woes. She had heard the Duchess speak of her in such terms as had created the warmest esteem in her favour; but, exclusive of this, she would have pitied her as a woman, had she been a stranger to her character. A female that does not sympathize in the afflictions of her sex, is hardly worthy to be called a woman. Lady Mornington was not of this description. She was sorry for every distress, and particularly for this deserving Lady, who had been rendered miserable by the late vile dissimulator. "Every thing I observe," remarked she to the Duchess of Albe-

marle, "confirms my reverence to Heaven for the blessings I enjoy. When I look around the wide universe, and see the numberless varieties of wretchedness that its inhabitants are compelled to endure, and then view my own situation, I think that I am an object of peculiar bounty. The idea may be presumptuous, yet it is powerful: and I should be the very essence of ingratitude, were I not constantly to return thanks for the manifold graciousness of the Eternal." Her Grace expressed herself of the same opinion; as, indeed, every person must who thinks of religion in a proper light. The obligations we are severally under, to the beneficent Author of our being, and of every felicity we enjoy, demand our signal veneration; and it is not satisfaction at another's misery that should increase our happiness. That would be a selfish and inhuman joy; but, surely, when we behold the sufferings of our fellow-creatures, and consider that we are exempt from such and such calamities, we should be grateful for the mercies showered on our heads, and not impiously imagine them our due. The Duchess now prepared to write an account of the dreadful transaction to the Ellincourts, who she knew would sincerely lament the sorrows of their amiable relation. The lovely Maria was an universal favourite, from the numerous mild and dignified virtues which characterised her nature. Her praiseworthy conduct as a wife deserves to be particularly noticed, though her tenderness had never been repaid by Lord Ballafyn, but with cruel and unworthy treatment. She had, from the day that united her to him till the hour of his dissolution, maintained the most affectionate behaviour. She was convinced, that adopting contrary methods could be of no service, except degrading her. But she always entertained a hope, that her continued love and attention might effect a reformation in his heart;

and, notwithstanding it failed in this case, let not my fair readers be dissuaded from practising the same; for never was there an instance of a man being conquered by a woman assuming the curb of authority: but many, many have been convinced of their errors, and brought to a knowledge of their duties, by subduing gentleness and mild entreaty. They may be won by affection but never will be awed by tyranny.

CHAPTER XLVII.

Indisposition of Lady Ellincourt.—Crim. Con. in high Life.

When the Ellincourts received the afflicting intelligence, they were, as may be imagined, truly grieved for the sufferings of Lady Ballafyn. The health of the Dowager Lady Ellincourt had been for some weeks visibly on the decline. The shock she now sustained affected her spirits to a violent degree, and increased the indisposition under which she laboured. Lord Ellincourt declared that his fair cousin ought to rejoice, and not to lament the death of such a wretch. "He murdered the happiness of the sweetest of women," cried he, "and, if I was her, instead of mourning at his decease, I would leave the willow for a worthier object, and assume the garb of joyous exultation." "Oh, fie! Edmund," said his mother, "thus to express yourself on an event that plunges every other individual into the deepest affliction." "I am afflicted on her account,"

warmly replied he; "I have the sincerest affection for my amiable cousin; but I cannot endure the thought that she should shed a tear to the memory of a man who has proved himself so utterly undeserving of her. His life was as abandoned as his end was unbecoming." "It is the knowledge of his wickedness that creates these emotions in our breasts," said Lady Emily. "It is awful to reflect on the future state of a character so depraved. His vices were rendered more heinous by the artifice with which he sought to gloss them over; and the warning that was offered him in the fate of his guilty brother, had he accepted, he might have become a worthy member of society for the remainder of his days. But his apparent reform, and the relapse, proved that the seeds of corruption were sown into his nature, and that his heart was hardened to conviction: it is not the loss of such a husband that can be a source of calamity to the gentle Maria, but it is the consideration of—oh! dreadful idea—of what may be his everlasting doom."

This latter suggestion checked the vivacity of Lord Ellincourt. He acknowledged the impropriety of jesting on a subject so replete with solemnity; but repeated his detestation of the principles of Lord Ballafyn. "I always despised him," continued he, "since he uttered a vile insinuation respecting her who now is Duchess of Albemarle —his daring to suspect me of designing the deliberate perversion of an innocent and lovely girl, rendered him, from that moment, odious in my eyes. I had never thought highly of his moral character; but the greatest libertine in the world, I should have imagined, could not have been so base as to have devised plans for the seduction of a child. He was sufficiently a villain, however, for the basest of all purposes; and because I had unthinkingly participated in too many of his pur-

suits, he believed that I was capable of practising vice in any shape. I always felt the stigma cast upon my fame, by such a suspicion; and I abhorred the fiend that had grossly intimated it." "Your warmth on this point is natural," answered his mother; "many men would have resented it in a way that I have ever rejoiced you did not; but, I am sorry to say, there are a class of beings, without being as diabolically inclined as the object we are speaking of, who are loath to ascribe merit to the actions of their fellow-creatures: they impute the most benevolent deeds to motives vastly foreign from the truth, and interpret virtue into the extremes of vice. So cruel is the world, that those people, who have no goodness or humanity in themselves, cannot bear to find others possessed of any. They would, in fact, banish such sentiments from the human breast: but they will never succeed where they are radically engrafted in the heart." "No," replied Emily, "it is not every one whose bosom will admit corruption, though there are numbers not proof against the tempter." "I never presumed to boast of extraordinary goodness," said Lord Ellincourt; "but I think and hope I should have shuddered, even in my most dissipated hours, at an act of premeditated baseness."

Lord Ellincourt did not, like many of his sex, attempt to conceal the imprudence of his youth from his amiable lady. He was too ingenuous in his temper to attempt dissimulation. The sincerity of his affection for Emily was evident; and his conduct, since his marriage, had secured her from jealousy. It showed him the more noble, therefore, to confess the failings he had been guilty of; and, instead of weakening her attachment, it strengthened it on more durable grounds.

To add to the already too heavy burthen of woe, news was received from Ireland of the death, after

a short illness, of Lady Caroline. The Dowager Lady Ellincourt bore it with that calm resignation which ever accompanies those who believe that the decrees of Him who rules the universe must be wise and just; yet it will not excite surprise, that such reiterated trials should have produced the most dangerous consequences on a constitution very far from robust. She had a mind that never permitted itself to be depressed at trifles; but no one suffered more severely under the force of real calamity. The strongest minds feel more intense anguish than those which are termed weak ones. The latter are opprest at things that are of no moment as much as if they were of the utmost importance; but the former spare their sorrow for the hour when efficient reasons shall demand the tear of agony or sympathy. Thus did Lady Ellincourt. She was ever ready to weep at affliction, whether she or her friend experienced it. Nor was it for herself alone she now endured the bitterness of grief, though her own troubles preponderated over every other.

We shall leave her for a while, and give our readers a brief account of the farther misfortunes of that worthy nobleman, Lord Mountmorris, whose case must have raised commiseration in every feeling bosom. His woes were now complete. His guilty abandoned wife had eloped with the yet more abandoned Sir Richard Palmer. When Lord M. returned from the affecting interview that has been detailed, between him and Lady Ellincourt, he went immediately to the apartment of his Lady. She was sitting by the window, her arm resting carelessly on its frame, and reading a letter. On perceiving the entrance of her Lord, she coloured, and put it hastily into her bosom. "You need not, madam," said he, advancing towards her, "have feared that I should

inquire into the contents of the paper you were perusing, as I have not so much curiosity about matters that concern you. Your insufferable behaviour when last we parted, has rendered you an object too contemptible in my eyes for your present or future conduct to occasion me the least uneasiness. I never thought I could have despised Lady Mountmorris; but the weak artifice she has practised upon my too easy credulity, is not to be forgot, though forgiven. I forgive you, madam, from my soul; but the purport of my visit is, to insist upon an immediate separation. I do not wish it to take place in animosity. I repeat, that I bear none to you. I would, at this moment, resign my existence to promote your welfare; yet hear me, madam, and do not interrupt what I am going to say. I will no longer be the dupe of vanity and base dissimulation. I have suffered the dictates of an extravagant affection to lead me beyond the bounds of reason; but there is a period when all shall be convinced of their errors. A day is not far off, when, perhaps, your Ladyship will repent of the part you have acted. However, to bring matters to a speedy conclusion, will you give your consent to a divorce? I will state to you the terms by which we part; and I hope you will not think me ungenerous. Your fortune is sufficient to maintain you in splendour. I shall allow you an additional annuity of five thousand pounds, which shall be regularly paid, while your character is untainted. Should I find that degraded, you cannot blame me if I withdraw it. Do you, or do you not, accede to these measures?" Had her Ladyship entertained the smallest particle of love for Lord M., this cool deliberate way of arguing would have affected her twenty times more than if he had been in a passion: but her heart was insensible to a manner refined as his. She seemed totally at a loss how to answer him; but kept

twirling her fan, and swelling with pride and indignation. He grew impatient for a reply. "My conduct to you, madam, has been honourable—I expect to be treated with the same." "Really, my Lord," exclaimed she, at length, "you are so impetuous, there is no knowing how to deal with you." "Oh, no, madam, you are mistaken; I am not impetuous, but calm and determined. It is of no use to evade my question, for I will be answered." After some further hesitation, she said, "Well, my Lord, as we cannot agree, I think it reasonable that we should separate, and your conditions are certainly honourable; but you must allow me to-day to consider of the affair—to-morrow morning it shall be settled to your satisfaction." This reply, though it abounded in indifference, contained a larger share of condescension than he had ventured to hope for from Lady M. He granted her request; and, bowing politely, left her to her meditations.

It is not to be supposed that he could wish to pass another hour in the presence of the woman who had ruined his tranquillity for ever; for let it not be imagined that he could forget the love he once had borne her. No; affection is not so easily eradicated. Though he despised her principles, he could not hate the woman. Her behaviour at his entrance, and the haste with which she folded up what he feared, and not unjustly, was a guilty evidence of shame, excited suspicions in his breast, very injurious to the honour of his Lady; and, notwithstanding his apparent unconcern before her, his soul was a conflict of agitating passions. "Yet, wherefore," cried he, "am I thus tortured and unhappy. She is lost to me—she shall be lost to me. Ah! but shall another trample on my rights, and dare to bask in beauty's arms; while I, condemning, and condemned, wander through the earth alone? Shall this wretch—

this Sir Richard Palmer, who is himself the husband of the most amiable of women, be the man to destroy my everlasting peace? Oh, Charlotte! Charlotte! little did I think, when leading thee to the hymeneal altar, how soon I should repent my vows. Unworthy woman! lost to virtue, and thy self. Was that charming person bestowed upon thee that thou mightest have the power of subduing all mankind, without ever forming a rational attachment for any one individual? Great Heaven, how wide a contrast between thy external and internal perfections! Was thy mind as noble as thy exterior is lovely, happy would have been the lot of thy husband. As it is, I am the most miserable of my sex." In this strain Lord M. bent his steps to a coffee-house he was accustomed to frequent. His chagrin was noticed by his companions, and some of them rallied him upon the cause of it. His Lady had made her character too conspicuous not to be known to every one; and by all his friends it was held in the contempt it deserved. "Well, Charles," said Lord Belgrove, "still does your countenance wear that melancholy aspect, and all concerning that painted darling of yours. I would sacrifice the whole sex before I would submit to be made eternally miserable by the arts of a perfidious fair. Mountmorris," he continued, "I am astonished at your want of resolution. Your present life is a state of wretchedness; and, till you are determined to be free, as once you were, never expect felicity; for it is a gift that cannot be possessed with Lady M." His Lordship answered, that he had formed a resolution, and explained the terms by which he intended to gain a separation. "You are too generous," exclaimed his friends; "she has enough to support her in elegance, and why should you contribute to the maintenance of a woman who is totally beneath your notice, and that can

already be indulged in every superfluity." "I would not go from my word," replied Lord Mountmorris. "I have agreed to this settlement, under the conditions named, and cannot swerve from them. I would wish to act honourably by her, though she has behaved with such injustice to me." Arguments were then produced for and against this undue liberality. But he still maintained his determination; and, after some hours' conversation, in which they sought to console him different ways, he quitted the party, and prepared to return home—a home that was now, alas! become hateful to him. He supped, however, at the house of a friend, and then repaired to Favel Lodge. When he arrived there, he was informed, by his servants, that Lady M. had retired to her chamber for the night. As he was no longer the slave of her charms, he retired to a room where he could in secret meditate on his sorrows. His rest was far from tranquil. His imagination was haunted with visions of wild affright—visions that were, alas! too fatally realized. In the morning he ordered his breakfast to be brought up stairs, as he was resolved not to see his Lady, till he went to receive his final answer. His commands were obeyed. On inquiring after Lady M., he was told she had not yet risen;—a circumstance that rather surprised him, as she was by no means a late riser. A horrid foreboding of evil flashed across his mind. He was upon the point of directing the domestics to ask if she was within her chamber; but, fearing to betray his emotion, he left the breakfast-parlour, and descended to his study. The first object that met his eye was a bit of paper, folded up, and directed to himself. Instinctively he took hold of it. It was the handwriting of his guilty wife. The contents were as follows:—

"My Lord,

"By the time you have read this, I shall be beyond the reach of your pursuit. I have adopted the only method to free myself from restraint. I acquit you of every imputation: but the cares of a wife are very far from suiting my disposition. I have money enough; therefore want no addition from your Lordship. You may perhaps guess the partner of my flight; but attempt not to follow us, for it will be of no avail. I never loved you, my Lord, as I have repeatedly declared; and, as it was not in my power to make you happy, do not blame me for making another so, who can fully return the obligation that is conferred.

"I am, my Lord, wishing you every felicity,

"Your's,

"CHARLOTTE."

"Dreadful!" exclaimed Lord Mountmorris, throwing down the letter, and stamping upon it. "Infamous woman—disgrace to thy sex! follow thee, no—I despise thee and thy accursed paramour too much to risk my life about thee. I would have once fought for thee—died for thee; but now it is all over; contempt and bitter indignation have conquered love," furiously he continued, as if shocked at the remotest suggestion of a faint remains of affection. For some minutes he walked about the room in a state of frantic distraction. His servants having heard some exclamations of alarm, hastened to their master, who they feared was ill. Observing their terrified looks, he said, "My friends, your mistress has yielded herself to the arms of a seducer." They started with horror. "Nay, start not, nor be distressed at the information, for she was as unworthy of your services as of my regard." He now inquired whether they were cer-

tain if their Lady had slept at home? They answered in the affirmative. Upon entering her chamber, however, that did not confirm their assertions, as it was evident, from the situation of the bed, that no person had been in it. Her own female attendant was not to be found; so that she had doubtless accompanied her mistress: the rest were ignorant of the matter. These circumstances were a convincing proof that she had eloped the night before, and, on a farther investigation, it was yet more fully ascertained; all her jewels and apparel were gone; her flight, therefore, must have been premeditated. After the first emotions had subsided, he wrote to Lady Ellincourt, acquainting her with his misfortunes; she being the only friend that truly condoled with him in his calamity. This was a third dreadful stroke to that amiable lady: she never felt her family afflictions so acutely, as to prevent her sharing in the sorrows of others. She particularly commiserated those of the excellent Lord M., who deserved to have possessed the best, instead of the worst, of women: but thus unequally are mortals joined—virtue and infamy are too often united. We shall proceed, in our next, to give a short account of the elopement

CHAPTER XLVIII

The Elopement, and Friendly Condolence.

From the period of Sir Richard Palmer's first meeting with Lady Mountmorris, at Pemberton Abbey, he had determined on completing her

ruin. They mutually read the language of each other's eyes; and those ready instruments of destruction contain a much larger share of expression than any words that can be uttered by the tongue. If a countenance would betoken anger, love, friendship, or soft-beaming pity, all those sensations may be discovered in an eye. There is not a passion that can be named that may not be traced in legible characters, on viewing those organs of refined sentiment, or its reverse. This guilty pair were reciprocally inspired with what they termed an ardent flame. I will not presume to call it love, as it was only the effect of unlawful desires. Sir Richard soon found an opportunity of declaring himself to the object of his depraved affections. He had not much difficulty in conveying a letter to her hands; and it was answered as warmly as he could expect. Several epistles passed between them. Meanwhile the amiable Lady Palmer suffered additional tyranny from her cruel husband. She was just in her suspicions. She had, indeed, a dangerous rival in Lady M. She had always been slighted by Sir Richard; but since his introduction to that beautiful woman, she was treated with more and more indifference. More than once he had the effrontery to discourse with eloquence on the charms of his favourite, in the presence of his wife; and to speak with admiration of the lustre of black eyes, though her's was the softest blue. These were insults that many women would have deeply resented; but Lady Palmer bore them without repining; at least, she concealed the pain they gave her from his observation. Her heart was the secret abode of agony. Jealousy reeked her soul to madness. Not that her gentle disposition would have sought to injure her enemy, had the power presented itself: but she could not be blind to what was, alas! too palpable a truth. She had married Sir Richard from a pure affec-

tion, and he had professed an equal attachment for her. But of what signification are the vows of an atheist: they are no sooner made than broke. A wretch who believes the vast creation to be the work of chance, is not likely to pay homage to any sacred institution: he placed no confidence in a future state, but thought, when this present life was spent, he should sink into the chaotic mass from whence he sprung; that we were born for pleasure, and that, as the only enjoyment we could ever derive must be from the indulgence of sensual gratifications, those mortals were infinitely to blame, who extolled the glories of virtue, and lived and died in the practice of it. Such were the sentiments of this vile infidel, and such ascendancy did they gain over him, that his whole time was divided between gaming, wine, and the worst characters of the female sex. He had cautiously concealed his opinions on religion from his lady, till they were united, or she never would have consented to wed a man of such principles. He did not long, however, preserve the veil of sanctity: after the sacred knot was indissolubly tied, he threw off the subtle mask he had assumed, and showed himself in his native colours. Lady Palmer was surprised and shocked at the shameless artifice of the abominable dissimulator; but it was too late to betray the extreme horror that she felt; she was the wife of Sir Richard Palmer, and she was sensible of the duties that appertained to her in that situation. They had been married about two years, when her happiness was for ever blasted by the machinations of the infamous Lady Mountmorris. To proceed with our story, Sir Richard, at length, ventured to propose an immediate elopement. It was at first gently refused by the lady, as she knew that a little opposition would but serve to increase

the ardor of his wishes: he implored her to have pity on his sufferings, and relieve the torments under which he lingered. She at last agreed to fly with him to Holland, representing Lord M. as a rigid and austere tyrant, with whom she could never hope for felicity; and stated his resolution to obtain a divorce, adding, that she was conscious she had done nothing to give him the least offence, but he was an implacable judge; in short, she had never loved him, but had been compelled by force to marry him. He, in return, assured her, that he had never even pretended to like Lady P.; that she was a forward woman, that had wantonly aspired to his hand without seeking to possess his heart; and he was now far more anxious to free himself from the clogging reins of matrimony than ever he had been to wear them. This was the letter her Ladyship was perusing when Lord Mountmorris entered the room; it concluded with thanking her for her compliance with his desires, and promising that she should never have cause to repent of her preference to him. That very night was fixed for her departure. She was strengthened in her resolution, when she found her Lord so impatient for a separation, and appointed the next morning for her final answer, well knowing that by that time she would be beyond the reach of giving one. In the evening she affected to retire to rest earlier than usual, informing the domestics that their attendance was unnecessary. Her own maid, Honoria, however, was in the secret of all her amours. She had lived with her before her marriage, and been a witness to her scandalous licentiousness; it was, therefore, the interest of Lady M. to retain this faithful servant: had she discharged her, she would have hazarded the risk of her character being exposed; besides, she could

not easily have got another who would have answered her purpose so well. This girl had packed up her wardrobe, and every thing that belonged to her mistress, ready for setting out, and offered to accompany her with the most hearty good-will, declaring it was her wish to live and die in her service. Lady M. said she was a kind creature, and requested she would attend her. The servants being engaged at supper, they esteemed it a proper opportunity to go off. They left Favel Lodge without exciting notice, and hastened to a carriage that was waiting for them at a little distance, in which was Sir Richard Palmer. He instantly alighted, and hurried them into the vehicle, exulting with fiery transport at the effect of his enterprise. They drove with rapidity, till, arriving at a sea-port, they embarked for Holland; her Ladyship rejoicing at the success of her plans, and the emotions that would rend the heart of her Lord on reading the letter that would impart to him her disgrace.

We leave the guilty pair to pursue their journey, and return to Lady Palmer. On learning the above dreadful intelligence, that amiable woman was in a state of distraction. Her sister, Lady Campbell, happened to be on a visit to her at the time. She had been about three months a widow: she soothed her as tenderly as she could, and endeavoured to reconcile her to the loss of a man so unworthy of her. "And yet," sighed she, "I loved him. Oh, Lady Ellincourt! would that we had not accepted your invitation to the Abbey, I might still have been happy with Sir Richard." Happiness indeed she had never tasted since she became Lady P. She had been acquainted with too many of his acts of gallantry for her peace not to have been materially destroyed, though she had forbore to load with reproaches the man

whom she had sworn to love, honor, and obey: but now, the small remains of tranquillity she possessed were forfeited. "Cruel Lady M." she exclaimed, "to forsake so good a husband, and plant daggers in the bosom of a woman that never injured you." How few would have expressed themselves so leniently: but revenge was a sensation never encouraged in the breast of this excellent female; it is a passion too despicable to be harboured in a virtuous mind. She felt her wrongs, and despised the perfidy of her who was their vile occasioner. Yet she pitied the sufferings she was convinced she would endure when the stings of conscience should overtake her; for that they would, was a truth she could not doubt. Conscience is the concomitant of guilt, and, sooner or later, those that err against the Divine commandments will labour under its oppressing influence. She sought for consolation in prayer to the God of all graciousness—Him, from whom alone she could hope to find a solace from her cares. She had received a pious education from the best of parents; but they were now committed to the tomb. Notwithstanding the impious profanity that marked the character of Sir Richard Palmer, and the tender attachment her heart had ever entertained for him, her principles were uncorrupt. She had allowed not the force of her affection to subdue the religious sentiments that had been inculcated into her nature from earliest infancy; and many disputes had arisen on this account between her and Sir Richard. She had mildly endeavoured to convince him of the doctrines of Christianity, and to converse upon the goodness of the Eternal. When this was the case, he always protested his unbelief of every thing of the kind, and repeated over and over again his firm conviction that no Supreme Being existed; and that it was only indulging ourselves

in false expectations, to place credence in ridiculous stories about Heaven, and such sort of stuff. At these periods tears were generally the reply of Lady Palmer. It was in vain to offer to reason with him, for he detested all attempts at argument. But oft did she importune the Deity to inspire him with a love of those sacred precepts, he so wickedly disavowed. And even now that her misery was at its height, she still prayed for his reform with fervent devotion.

We now go back to our unhappy friend, Lord Mountmorris. We have stated, that he informed Lady Ellincourt, by letter, of the flight of his Lady. A few days having passed, his grief being sufficiently abated to admit of his leaving the solitude of his apartment, he ordered his carriage, and proceeded to Pemberton Abbey, as he wished to hold one more mournful conversation on the subject of his woes. On arriving there, he was told that Lady Ellincourt was seriously indisposed, and could not see company; but, upon sending in his name, he was instantly admitted. Her Ladyship was sitting on a sofa, supported by a pillow, and looking, indeed, very ill. She desired Lord M. to advance, with a countenance expressive of the deepest melancholy. "I am concerned, madam," said he, "to behold you thus, and fear that my present visit is an intrusion." "Oh, no," answered Lady Ellincourt, pressing his hand, and requesting him to be seated, "your visits were never intrusive. They are now, more than ever, acceptable. Since we last met, I have drank of the cup of affliction; therefore, can more fully participate in your's." "We are then mutual sympathizers," said his Lordship, "but I hope your afflictions, madam, are not irremediable—mine can never be removed." Lady Emily, who was present, would have retired; but her mother said, "No, my dear, Lord Mountmorris knows I have no secrets from my family.

You are acquainted with the story of his sorrows, and, I am sure, compassionate them as strongly as myself." "Indeed I do," replied the lovely Emily, a tear glistening in her eye.

Lady Ellincourt then said, that her calamity was of a nature that would admit of no removal, save by death; and proceeded to relate to him, as well as her agonized feelings would allow, the loss she had sustained. "After an estrangement of so many years," cried she, weeping, "conceive, my Lord, the distress of mind I endured, on hearing that my daughter was no more," "I do conceive it," answered he; "it must have been poignant in the extreme. Yet time, I trust, will alleviate the pungent smart." "It will," said she, "I know it will. I feel that my sufferings draw near a close. I think, and hope, that I am fast hastening to that bourne from whence no traveller returns." As she uttered these words, a ray of celestial animation lightened up her countenance, and seemed to diffuse comfort through her heart. Nothing is so pleasing to an opprest mind, as the consideration that a time is near, when that oppression must cease. Particularly if it is to Heaven we are looking for succour and relief. Earthly prospects of redress are uncertain; but God's power and wisdom never fails. When man rejects our cause, he takes it up, and preserves us with almighty care. Lady Ellincourt, likewise, mentioned the fate of Lord Ballafyn, representing that as an additional source of disturbance and uneasiness She now adverted to his own sorrowful case, and inquired "how he intended to proceed?" "I shall hasten," answered he, "to the Supreme Court of Judicature; and, stating circumstances, sue for a lawful divorce. It is the only method I can have recourse to; for, did I know the retreat of my abandoned wife, I would now disdain to ask her consent to a measure which the laws of my coun-

try give me a right to claim. She is unworthy of the shadow of respect from me; and, as to damages, I should never think of; for money could not afford the least compensation for the injury that has been done me; therefore, I shall decline a prosecution of the kind. The sole object of my wishes is, to be declared free." Lady Ellincourt strongly commended that determination, and advised him to pursue it without delay. "O that I had abided by your instructions," exclaimed he, "a few months ago, and viewed Miss Rivers, not as the most angelic of her sex, but as a dangerous enchantress, who would prove an everlasting foe to my happiness. Had I so acted, I should not rashly have plunged into so wretched a thraldom. Yet, wherefore do I talk thus, since what is past cannot be recalled. As soon shall the world be uncreated, as one hour of our existence be revoked. She was beautiful—I thought her virtuous. Perhaps I was not the first that has been deceived by a false show of external allurements." "Few men, I acknowledge," answered Lady Ellincourt, "could have been impenetrable to the charms of this most deceitful fair; and, while you believed her perfection, it is not to be wondered at that you was rather directed by the dictates of affection, and your own experimental observation, than guided by the advice of others. However, do not, I implore you, give way to grief. You have, in reality, lost nothing; as a woman that can desert her husband, especially such a husband as you have been, is unworthy his possession. As to your character, it is too well known for the smallest slur to be cast upon your fame. All must respect you, and all have long despised her."

Lord Mountmorris assured her, that he would not indulge grief upon the occasion; that he was sensible of the truth of all she had advanced, and should endeavour to derive consolation from the

joys of a sentimental life: "A life," exclaimed he, with a sigh, "which I have always admired, but never tasted since my inauspicious marriage. I have not been used to gaiety and dissipation; but Lady M. could not endure the name of domestic amusements. Nothing but plays and public entertainments suited her taste; therefore I was obliged to renounce my speculative schemes, and rush into a vortex of folly and extravagance that my heart inwardly abhorred. She was very young, and I thought would become more rational in the course of time; but how far this was from the case your Ladyship knows." He could not here help bursting into a violent flood of tears, in which Lady Ellincourt and Emily joined. Regaining more composure, he resumed, "I the readier made excuses for her volatility, as I imagined that whilst single she had led a retired life, conceiving it imprudent as an orphan, and without a protector, to launch into the busy world; consequently, when married, she was doubly impatient to see every thing that was to be seen: but I find now, that, so far from living in retirement, she partook of the pleasures of the town as much as when under the sanction of a husband's authority; and, unaccustomed to restraint, she had regarded not the laws of propriety or prudence." Lady Ellincourt was no stranger on this point; but she did not increase the distress of Lord M. by continuing the discourse. Further condolences having passed between them, he took his leave.

Lady Ellincourt was somewhat soothed by his friendly sympathy; but her health she felt was getting gradually worse; she was prepared for the solemn moment of her departure, and resigned to meet the presence of her grand Eternal Judge. Oh, happy resignation! may all, as the blissful period draws nigh, be inspired with thy potential influence.

CHAPTER XLIX.

Moralizing, and speedy Intelligence.

During this period, the amiable inhabitants of Darby-House were not unacquainted with the sorrows of the worthy Lord Mountmorris. The elopement that had taken place soon found its way into the papers of daily intelligence. Affairs of that nature are never long a secret. The world is too ready to rumour calumnious reports, to the disadvantage of innocent individuals, to omit the publication of real facts. The accounts spoke very plain of the lady's real character, and hinted that it was believed the parties were gone to Holland; but on that point they were not certain. "I vow and protest," said the mischievous Amelia, when the Duke of Albemarle had finished reading this fashionable crim. con. case, "that, were it not for the sufferings of the wife and husband of these wretches, I should rejoice at their tormenting one another: he is too great a libertine not to forsake her soon, and then she will have powerful scope for repentance, and perhaps it may be the means of her reformation; but I am very sorry for their misfortunes; though I think, if they are wise, they will hardly consider them as such." "Oh, madam," said the Duke, "we may think so upon taking a casual survey of circumstances, but on reflection it will appear in a different light. This unhappy nobleman believed his wife was

virtuous, till he proved her otherwise, therefore great is his calamity: and Lady Palmer loved the villain, notwithstanding his unworthiness; consequently her grief must be excessive. As to a reformation being worked in her Ladyship, I fear it will be a long time 'ere that happens. She is too beautiful not to have plenty of admirers; and, whilst she can lead a life of pleasure and infamy, she will be in no haste to repent." "I have met Sir Richard Palmer at the gaming-table," remarked Sir Everard; "he is a handsome and a polite man; but I never was much prepossessed in his favour. We once entered into a conversation, and I found his sentiments so opposite to mine, that I was far from pleased with his society. Soon after I heard the character he bore, and then I cautiously avoided his company." "My heart bleeds for Lady Palmer," said the Duchess of Albemarle; "her mild dignified graces, and melancholy though lovely countenance, won my esteem at a first glance; too quickly I perceived the cause of her misery; the negligence and inattention of her husband convinced me that she had either lost or never possessed his affections. But when I saw all his attention directed to the worthless Lady Mountmorris, I felt as if the barbed arrow was pointed to destroy my own peace; the manner in which she received his compliments, showed that she was not displeased with them; and there cannot be a greater incentive for a man to proceed in his base designs, than a woman seeming flattered and obliged with what she ought to repulse with the utmost indignation: few men are so depraved to persist when they know they are despised." "That observation I am sure is just, my dear," replied the Duke; "half the women owe their ruin to their imprudent behaviour: when first a man offers to notice them, particularly married men, a female, that has any

pretensions to goodness or sensibility, must be aware that the assiduities of a married man can be only with a view to deprive her of her honor. He has a wife, to whom his love and tenderness is due; and did she at once disdain his profligate addresses, he would probably return to a sense of virtue, and the duties incumbent on his situation: but while he is caressed and treated as the most amiable of his sex, instead of being spurned at as a monster of corruption, he will continue to practise his artillery of seductive arts, and betray more victims to destruction. If the lady is likewise married, her guilt is doubly aggravated, as she breaks the most solemn of all vows: if single, her crime is still of the blackest die: she injures not herself alone, but an innocent unoffending woman. Where either have entered into the sacred band of matrimony, no excuse can be alleged." "Certainly not," answered the Duchess; "and that woman who can take a delight in triumphing over the felicity of another, deserves to fall a sacrifice to her inhuman cruelty. For my part, I love my sex too well to bear the idea of occasioning them a moment's pain; but I have seen many, and even heard them declare, that nothing gave them so much satisfaction, as raising a spark of jealousy in the breast of a rival, though they have vowed at the same time that they had not the smallest intention of injuring the object; but their pride was flattered by the supposition, that they were of consequence enough to create a passion of such a tendency."

"That is, indeed, a malicious gratification," cried Lady Mornington, "and cannot be too much reprehended; the bare supposition of such treachery would fill a mind endued with rectified principles with horror, and, instead of flattering their pride, humble it to the very dust." "Nothing is so diabolical, in my opinion," said the Duke,

"as a character that wantonly labours to destroy the happiness of a fellow-creature. There are numbers, who would not adopt the effectual measures for that purpose, that yet would not hesitate to act as if glorying in its commission. I think this is a vice equal to, if not exceeding, libertinism; it evinces such an utter want of principle and feeling, that those who can be guilty of it must be dispossessed of every moral sentiment. I have known both men and women that have studied to engage the affections of the other sex, merely with a design to render them miserable, by proving at last, what they should have done at first, that no regard existed towards them;—however, this is a digression from the subject of our discourse. To return to what you were observing, my dear Fanny, on the negligence of Sir Richard to his Lady, when we were at the Abbey, I believe it was visibly remarked by all present; and the conduct of Lady Mountmorris to her husband was as obvious—few men could have resisted such behaviour as she displayed; and, indeed, I must affirm, that, in cases of this kind, more unhappiness arises to individuals from a neglect of public attention to each other than from any source that can be mentioned. A man, for instance, without being a professed libertine, who sees a beautiful woman, like Lady Palmer, slighted by a wretch similar to Sir Richard, watches the actions of both. She is respectful and affectionate; he austere and reserved: if he is not as great a villain in himself, he is touched with commiseration for her misfortunes, and he surveys her with an eye of pity. After viewing her a considerable time, an opportunity presenting itself, he ventures to address her; he expresses his surprise that a husband can be possessed of so lovely a woman, and not be more sensible of the merits of the treasure Heaven has bestowed upon him. This speech is

perhaps made when she is least prepared to answer it; it is not uttered in a way to create offence, and her heart is the abode of innocence. She is affected by his kindness; a tear trickles down her cheek, and she heaves a heavy sigh; these tokens of distress add to her charms, and heighten the compassion of him who is, by gradual degrees, becoming her admirer. He then exclaims, 'Heavens, what a villain! to requite such tenderness as thine with such barbarous treatment. Oh! that I could boast of such a wife, how different would I behave.' Awakened to a conviction of her danger, she now attempts to fly, requesting that he will not again presume to force a conversation so improper for her to hear. The indignant warmth with which she repulses his improvident declaration, increases his passion: hurried away by its dictates, he madly seizes her hand, and, imprinting on it a fervent kiss, implores her not to be offended with the liberty he takes; that he reveres her virtues, but is distracted to think it should be rewarded with cruelty and indifference.

"She replies not; but, snatching her hand from him, hastens away with precipitation. He is not deterred by this discouragement from renewing his protestations of esteem at the next interview he can find an opportunity of having. If she has indeed the virtue and the presence of mind of the amiable Lady Palmer, she will repel every attack upon her honor, and maintain it to the very extinction of her existence. But it is not every one who can preserve their reputation amidst such degrading usage as she was constantly in the habit of receiving—we will suppose her but too susceptibly inclined. Her lover is young, handsome, and insinuating. At first she represents the duty that is owing to her consort, and intimates that his having failed in his, is no extenuation for her dereliction from the paths of rectitude. He quickly

obviates these objections to his wishes, and, to come to a point, asks her, 'if she could love him, were she under no restraint to the contrary?' She blushingly acknowledges that she could then prefer him to the rest of his sex. In a transport of delight he kneels at her feet, to thank her for so generous a declaration; vowing that he never felt so truly blest as in this moment of rapturous ecstacy. She desires him to rise, and gently beseeches him to forget that there is such a creature as herself in being. He then can no longer restrain himself within bounds. 'Shall I,' cries he, 'forget that the sun shines, whilst I feel the warmth of his powers? As soon shall that be the case as your dear image be banished from my remembrance. Oh, cruel fair! to advise me to forget thee!' 'Your impetuosity is alarming,' she answers; 'I never can be your's, and why will you torture yourself and me by pursuing a discourse so destructive to our peace?' Every reply she makes augments his ardor. I need not dwell upon the success of his endeavours. She has listened to the tender tale,—that is the first step towards guilt: she has owned a return of love,—that is the second; and what the third will be, may be too easily guessed. Thus may the noblest sentiments be corrupted by circumstances. Pity was the origin of this unhappy event on his side—gratitude on her's."

Sir Everard perfectly concurred in what the Duke had advanced, adding, "that he did not believe one man out of twenty would attempt to molest the happiness of a couple who were living in mutual felicity, and who seemed to make it their study to be obliging to each other." "Your description," said Fanny addressing the Duke, "is, I dare say, far from exaggerated: these things are but too common. Would women, who have the misfortune to be united to objects so unworthy of them, preserve their native honor, they must be blest with

an unwonted share of prudence and discretion; they must resolve to combat against passions that are likely to prove hostile to their repose. It is difficult, when a woman receives repeated slights from him who ought to be her sovereign protector, instead of meeting with tenderness and affection, to assume a cheerful countenance, even for a moment; yet in some cases it is indispensably necessary: her closet is the place for lamentation: let her not expose her unhappiness and her husband's character abroad: it will be of no other avail than laying her open to the insults of the other sex, and seldom obtaining for her the compassion of her own. If she is necessitated to appear in public, great will be the merit if her face can wear a smile when her heart is breaking.

"Lady Palmer, it was evident, endeavoured to conceal the agonizing state of her mind, though through the thin veil might be traced her inward sorrow; her deportment to the author of her woes was assiduously attentive, and her features were rendered more interesting for not being adorned with that look of extreme gaiety, which, I think, diminishes, instead of improving, female charms." "I may be very culpable," said Lady Mornington, archly; "but, I declare, I should hardly condemn a woman for resenting such indignant conduct, could she do it without the shame recoiling on herself; for the consequences must be more destructive to her honor and tranquillity than to that of the wretch on whom she would be revenged. Virtue is transparent as crystal, and, when once forfeited, an internal peace is for ever sacrificed." "Most true," answered the Duchess; "yet I can, with your Ladyship, plead excuses for women that deviate under such aggravating circumstances." This conversation passed whilst the family were at breakfast, the newspaper having given rise to it: the meal being ended, the discussion closed.

The Duke and Sir Everard went out for a morning's ramble, and our heroine and her friend repaired to their beloved study. Here they read and commented by turns for about a couple of hours. The Duchess then played a tune upon the harp, and accompanied it with her melodious voice. Amelia joined in the singing: her voice without being powerful was peculiarly sweet: it was agreeably modulated, and full of the most pleasing variation. The Duchess was more scientific, but both were admirable. "I never heard any person play so much to my liking as your Grace," cried Amelia, "though I have always been amongst musical folks. I am not accustomed to flatter, and particularly my Fanny, but I must tell the truth. There is as much difference in the manner in which practitioners perform music, as in any science on the face of the universe." "I have been told that I am skilful," replied the Duchess; "but I do not pretend to vouch for the justice of that assertion. I am fond of music, and that may be one great reason why I excel." "'Music,'" exclaimed Amelia, in the language of the Mourning Bride, "'has charms to soothe a savage breast, to soften rocks, and bend the knotted oak.' I am surprised," continued she, "how any one can be averse to such divine harmony as these sweet instruments afford. There seems to be a magic inspiration attached to them, that conveys a power to the soul, indescribable, and almost inconceivable, save to those who feel its heavenly influence in themselves. If a temper is ruffled by a temporary disappointment, or perplexed by any unforeseen accident, comfort may be derived in music:—this I know, not from experience, but by inward selection and outward observation. It is reckoned the universal composer of affliction." "I believe," replied Fanny, "that where one dislikes it, fifty are enamoured of it. I never heard but

two people express a decided aversion to it; one was a rough sailor, and the other a nobleman, whose taste was little worthy of imitation; in general, men are as partial to it as women." They were here interrupted by the entrance of a servant with a letter for the Duchess; it was from the young Lady Ellincourt, and contained the following distressing intelligence:

"My dearest Fanny,

"Do not, upon receipt of this, be too much alarmed. Lady Ellincourt, the mother of my Edmund, our thrice dear and valuable friend, is dying! She has been indisposed for some days, but is now considerably worse. She requests to see you immediately: we are all distracted! The thoughts of losing such a woman, such a mother, such an ornament to her sex, is afflicting in the extreme. Yet the loss will be only ours; she will exchange an earthly tabernacle for a heavenly one; this barren spot of land for an eternal kingdom, where the wicked cease from troubling; where immortal pleasure reigns, and sorrow there no entrance finds. This blissful consideration is all that consoles us at her departure—all did I say? will it not be the greatest of consolations, that which God himself dictates. Oh! Fanny, were we all as secure of happiness in the celestial courts as the amiable Lady Ellincourt, how few would dread to die. I cannot proceed any further; if you can reach Pemberton Abbey soon, you may enjoy the mournful satisfaction of a parting interview with her who I know you so greatly respect.

"I am, dearest Fanny,

"Your unhappy friend,

"Emily Ellincourt."

Tears flowed fast down the cheeks of the Duchess as she perused this epistle. She gave it into the hands of Lady Mornington; for she could not communicate its contents. She warmly sympathized in her sorrow. Presently the Duke returned with Sir Everard. On hearing what had happened, he proposed to set out as speedily as possible for the Abbey. "If we delay," said he, "we may be too late to behold our worthy friend once more. Sir Everard and Lady Mornington will, I am sure, in such an emergency as this, excuse our absence: we shall probably return in the course of a few days." "Most certainly," replied they; "we should be very sorry if we were to be an obstruction." "I hope," said Amelia, "Lady Ellincourt is not quite so bad as is represented, at least that she may recover." "I am afraid," answered Fanny, "that that hope is vain, yet cannot help myself indulging it."

The carriage being now at the door, the Duke and Duchess took leave of their guests, and set off with woe-fraught hearts for Pemberton-Abbey.

CHAPTER L.

Death of the Dowager Lady Ellincourt, and mutual Condolences.

When they arrived at the Abbey, a melancholy scene, indeed, awaited them. Lady Ellincourt, they were informed, still lived; but a few hours

were expected to terminate her existence. Emily came, in tears, from her apartment to meet them: she seized Fanny's hand, and prest it to her lips, exclaiming, "The last time we met, our hearts were the mansions of joy; now, alas! they are the inmates of afflicting grief." The Duchess could hardly articulate a reply, so overcome was she with the poignant weight of her feelings. "I will go and apprise her that you are come," said Emily; "it will be a source of pleasure to her to behold her beloved Fanny once again." "She is then perfectly sensible?" asked our heroine. "Oh, yes," replied Lady Ellincourt, "her mind has never been alienated for a moment; she anticipates her departure with feelings of ecstatic rapture; such as can only be tasted by those whose consciences are purified by the influence of the Holy Spirit." "I am rejoiced to hear she is so resigned," said Fanny; "goodness like hers, emanating from religious sentiments, has nought to fear on that day, which, to the sinful sin-loving children of vice and folly, is a day of terror. No, to those who look towards the joys of heaven through the merits of the Redeemer, the approach of the grim tyrant carries no terror; he is rather hailed as a friend that relieves them of the load of mortality; takes them out of this state of trial and temptation, places them where they are secure from both, and bestows immortality as glorious as it is lasting."

Emily hastened to her chamber, and presently returned, desiring she would walk up. The Duke meanwhile was asked into a parlour, where sat Lord Ellincourt and Mr. Hamilton. Woe was painted on the countenances of both: they rose, and mournfully saluted him; he endeavoured to suppress his emotion, but his looks were a more faithful prognosticator. Lord Ellincourt, no longer gay and sprightly, burst into tears, as he exclaimed,

"There are no hopes." "No hopes from mortal aid, perhaps," replied the Duke; "but God can yet restore her." "If it is His gracious will," ejaculated Lord Ellincourt. "And if not," returned the Duke, "he will receive her to His imperial courts: wafted by cherubic legions to the heavenly coast, a ministering angel she will shine, and there irradiate the starry globe." "Oh, she has ever been the best of women and of mothers," cried Lord Ellincourt; "her portion must be endless bliss." "Then let that sweet reflection prove a consolation at once," answered the Duke and Mr. Hamilton; "we lose her, but she will gain the bright reward of all her actions."

Whilst these friends were mutually condoling with each other, the Duchess accompanied Emily to the chamber of Lady Ellincourt. As she entered, a cold tremor seized her frame; the thought of how recently its occupant had been in the enjoyment of good health, and was now expiring, chilled her blood. Recovering her resolution, however, she approached the bed. As soon as Lady Ellincourt perceived her, she extended her hand, saying, "Oh, my beloved Fanny, I am glad you are come. Why do you weep?" continued she, observing the tears roll down her cheeks; "is it because I am hastening to the palace of the Eternal, the seat of righteousness? If you knew the inward tranquillity that lodges here, (pointing to her heart,) instead of tears, smiles would illumine that lovely countenance." "I would hope, oh, thou friend and guardian of my early infancy," returned Fanny, "that many years are yet reserved for you on earth." "Dear girl, 'tis almost cruel," answered the dying Lady Ellincourt, "to desire such a procrastination of my happiness. It was intended by our wise Creator, when he formed us out of kindred dust, that to

that dust our mortal bodies should return: but our souls will, we are instructed to believe, ascend to the presence of their heavenly Judge, or descend into a place prepared for the devil and his angels! as soon as breath should have left this frail tenement of clay. I have long anticipated the moment of departure, and I am convinced it is nigh at hand. I had but one wish—it was to see you; that wish is gratified, and I die content. You have always been the object of my tender affections. When first I saw you, a sweet and, as I imagined, an orphan girl, I felt an interest in your welfare that was indescribable, and an inward conviction that your extraction would one day be proved to be noble: it was not a false conjecture: the transports I experienced on the discovery of your parents are not to be expressed; they resulted from the ardent sincerity of my regard: and when I beheld your vows given at the altar to the Duke of Albemarle, I rejoiced with joy unfeigned. You are worthy to possess such a husband, and he is deserving even of your inestimable self. But is he at the Abbey, or have you taken this journey alone?" "He is with my father and Lord Ellincourt," said Fanny. Emily, who was sitting by the bed-side, asked, "if she would wish to see the Duke?" "I am afraid," replied Fanny, "that Lady Ellincourt will be fatigued by conversing so much." "Oh, no," answered she, "I like to converse; I am better whilst discoursing with my friends; let me, I entreat thee, see the husband of this angel fair, and bless them together, 'ere I depart to the kingdom that is prepared for me on high." Emily then retired to acquaint the Duke with Lady Ellincourt's desire. He instantly hurried to her chamber. She took his hand, and putting it in Fanny's, said, "May the Almighty bless and preserve you both—may you long be spared to make each other happy; and when at

last death shall receive you in her cold embrace, may the knot that binds you still be undissolved: it is ratified above, and angels will confirm your vows." The Duke was sensibly affected by the fervency of this address. "Amen to that prayer, dearest Lady Ellincourt," said he, "and may it be answered." Fanny regarded him with a look of bewitching tenderness. "Amiable pair," said Lady Ellincourt, observing them attentively; "it is heaven on earth to love and be beloved. Kind souls, how you weep; and yet it is not kindness, since it would induce you to wish my bliss delayed. Emily, my child, comfort them if you can. Alas! you are as distressed as they are." Here Lord Ellincourt entered. He inquired with anxious solicitude, if she felt any change. "The best of changes," replied she; "I am every moment nearer to my God; his judgment-seat is already in my view; already have I obtained a glance of his incorruptible glories. Edmund," she continued, taking his hand, and joining it to Emily's, "promise me that you will always love this dear, this excellent creature; I could not with pleasure have seen you united to another, but she is worthy of you." "Oh, if I love her not with the affection her merits so richly deserve," answered Lord Ellincourt, "if I regard her not as a treasure sent to create my felicity, and, while life remains, reward her with an attachment the most ardent; may I never approach the throne to which thou, my revered, respected parent, art hastening." On which he warmly embraced the charming Emily, who returned his caresses with kindred feelings. The agony which Fanny's mind endured for Lady Ellincourt, had hitherto prevented her from asking after her mother: that worthy woman had never left the bed-side of her aunt for two days before; but had at length been prevailed on to retire for an hour to her chamber, on condi-

tion that she should be disturbed in case of the smallest alteration taking place. She now appeared. The sight of her weeping Fanny illumined her countenance with a momentary joy. She ran to her embrace; but her transports subsided, on perceiving the countenance of Lady Ellincourt turn suddenly to an ashy paleness: they flew to her. She had swooned. It was not, however, the swoon of death: she presently revived.

"Where is my nephew?" she demanded. "He is not here." Mr. Hamilton was sent for: they all surrounded her bed. "What a happiness," cried she, as an angelic smile played upon her features, "to die in the midst of relations such as these. Oh! when your last moments approach, may every one of you be as composed and as resigned as I am; a greater blessing the Divine favour cannot bestow upon you. Death! my children, is only an evil to the wicked: we are all guilty creatures, and, at best, but unprofitable servants; but then the Lord is too merciful not to pardon; his graciousness is beyond our comprehension; and happy is it for us, when we know that he is gracious. My beloved niece," said she, addressing Mrs. Hamilton, "you have experienced affliction's smart; you have been separated for above twenty years from the husband of your early choice, and made to deplore the imaginary loss of an only child; you are now restored to the arms of the best of men, and of daughters; may it be long, my Emily, 'ere you are deprived of either of these dear relations—doubly dear, from having been torn from you under such inauspicious circumstances; may the remainder of your days be spent in the enjoyment of tranquillity, and. when the ransoming debt of nature is paid, may we meet in realms of joy." "We shall all meet, I trust," answered Mrs. Hamilton; "and, oh, how glorious a meeting will it be; not as mortals shall

we congratulate each other, but as heavenly spirits released from slavery and bondage." "This world," said Mr. Hamilton, "can produce only one solid gratification, that is, the love and the esteem of those attached to us by the ties of blood; or, what is nearly as binding, friendship; wealth, titles, honors, are not to be ranked in competition with a reciprocation of tender offices, from those about us. All that can call forth a sigh at leaving this earthly abode, is the parting with our relatives and friends; yet it is but parting for a moment, and 'ere long we shall meet to part no more. There, surrounded by the beatified spirits of those, who, through a merciful and gracious Saviour, have entered into the regions of eternal bliss, our kindred souls, released from their clay tenements, will meet—recognise—and, refined from the grossness of earthly feelings, rise to the highest altitude of friendship, love, and joy. Oh! how these thoughts exalt the soul; how, even on this earth, do I taste, by anticipation, the joys of heaven: our loss will be your gain—your eternal gain. This dispensation *must* be right; 'tis from God; be reconciled to His will, remembering that life is His gift, and death His messenger."

"Your sentiments accord with the worthy Dr. Woodward's," replied Lady Ellincourt; "he maintains the same opinion, and it has ever been mine. Human nature will be human nature. I acknowledge, that I cannot restrain a pang, when I think of leaving you; but it is wrong, since I die assured of rejoining you in the paradise of the saints."

Thus spoke this excellent woman, this pattern for her sex to follow. She would have proceeded to say more; but they begged she would, for the present, endeavour to gain some repose, and not weary herself by further conversation. She was at last persuaded, and, laying down, fell into a

slumber that continued two hours: this, it was hoped, would cause a favourable change when she awoke: but in that hope they were disappointed; it was only the prelude to her dissolution. Dr. Woodward had now joined the family. He had long known Lady Ellincourt, and to know, was to esteem her. Since her illness he was frequent in his visits. The conversations of a really pious and good man are ever acceptable, and they were peculiarly so at this period: his presence seemed to increase her satisfaction. She looked around her, and smiled serenity: her speech never forsook her. "God bless you, my children," said she; "recollect, I bid you but a short adieu." A few moments having passed, growing rather paler, she said, "I come, I obey thy sacred mandate, my Saviour and my Lord!" and, reclining her head on the shoulder of Mr. Hamilton, she heaved a gentle sigh, and expired; one hand clasped in that of her niece, the other in Lady Ellincourt's. Happy, enviable exit. Who would not wish to die in such a frame as her's? and to die surrounded by such affectionate relations was a tenfold source of ecstacy. She was not afflicted with any particular complaint. The primary cause of her indisposition, was the grief she sustained at the loss of her daughter; that, together with the other accumulation of shocks she received, brought on a decline, which occasioned her demise. To describe the sorrow of these amiable individuals would be impossible: severe was their loss: long they wept over the departed. Mrs. Hamilton closed her eyes, and embraced her for the last time; the Duchess of Albemarle likewise pressed her lips to those of the deceased, as did also Emily. The mournful scene being past, they withdrew from the awful chamber of death to a farther apartment; and it was long 'ere any of them could find words to address each other. At length

they offered a mutual condolement. Dr. Woodward opened the discourse, by expatiating on the goodness of her, who, from a woman, was transformed into an ethereal spirit. "Conceive, my children," said he, "if mortals dare conceive, the state of bliss to which she is raised. Mortality shaken off, and she is arrayed in robes of righteousness: let her piety, her exalted worth, console you." "It will, it must," said Mr. Hamilton; "the violence of our emotion over, and reflection will bring comfort to our aid." "We had vainly flattered ourselves with a hope," cried Mrs. Hamilton, "that so valuable a life would have been longer continued to us, as she had but just completed her sixtieth year; but God's will be done; he has seen fit to remove her from a troublesome world, and translated her to his celestial kingdom, and we must not repine."

Thus passed this day of grief, a day that would ever be held sacred by the family of this deserving woman. When we think of the immense sums which the affluent so wantonly lavish in the pomp of retinue, equipage, and dress; when we see the quantity of viands which form the dinner of one epicure in high life; and consider how many poor families the price of this expensive entertainment might, if properly applied, redeem from the horrors of famine; can we, for an instant, wonder that the poor should with indignation look on them while living, and follow them with apathy and more than silent curses to the tomb? The rich wonder that they are unhappy, yet are ignorant of the cause; they become more extravagant, and then expect felicity—fatal mistake! When on the bed of sickness, when their pale faces are turned towards the wall, and death, that grim monster, approaches in all his terrors, neither the prayers of the fatherless or the widow are offered to a throne of grace in their behalf

When they die, they are unlamented: the sigh of heartfelt sorrow, the tear of gratitude, the warm yet melancholy glow of admiration, all—all, are absent.

But those, who to riches unite benevolence, to rank condescension, and in exalted stations become accessible to the calls of humanity, are loved and revered during life; when dead, they are deplored with the tenderness of friendship; and their memory cherished with delight. Thus was it with Lady Ellincourt; from the lowest domestic of her establishment, to the highest nobles of her acquaintance. It might well be said of her, that she was a Christian indeed.

The next morning the Duke of Albemarle quitted Pemberton Abbey. The Duchess could not think of leaving her parents and the Ellincourts till their sorrow was a little abated. She wrote a note to Lady Mornington, apologizing for continuing absent from her, but representing it was a duty owing to the memory of the deceased, and to the feelings of the survivors, to remain with them till after the funeral. She concluded, by desiring that she would consider Darby-House as her's, and act as the mistress of it. The Duke conveyed this epistle: it was received by Lady Mornington with much concern. She knew how deeply her friend was affected, and she participated in her woe. The amiable Lady Ellincourt would have excused the attendance of Fanny, in consideration of her personal feelings; but the Duchess of Albemarle never studied her own feelings, when there was a probability of contributing to the ease of another. Death was a melancholy scene; yet she forgot the pain it occasioned to herself in the pleasure it afforded to the soul of the departed: had Lady Ellincourt died without seeing her, she could never have been happy. Those who regard the sufferings of

the living, and let them operate so as to prevent their granting consolation to the last moments of the dying, prove themselves divested of the very feelings they would boast of possessing; as the sensations they would experience would be only a horror at thinking of the grave, and that they must shortly be as the object then before them; not the dictates of nature acting within them, or they would prefer the tranquillity of those who had but a few hours to survive, to their own. About three days had elapsed from the death of Lady Ellincourt, when Mrs. Barlowe, the mother of Emily, paid a visit of condolence to the afflicted inhabitants of Pemberton Abbey. This lady came not so much to partake in the general grief, and pour the balm of comfort into the heart of her daughter, as from a curiosity to see the Duchess of Albemarle, of whose beauty she had heard much talk. She had been extremely mortified upon the marriage of the lovely Fanny, whom her proud spirit had hoped to find indeed an orphan, and of no consequence. The discovery of her birth, and the eclat she afterwards made in the fashionable world, instead of creating pleasure in the bosom of this haughty woman, raised her spleen to a powerful degree. "A nobody," said she, "a creature but yesterday dependent upon the charity of the public, all of a sudden to be noticed by a man in such a high sphere, and caressed like one of the first ladies in the land. I dare say it is all a fudge about her mother being a descendant of the Somertowns, hatched up by the artful wench herself, and some of the sycophants whom she has persuaded to believe the idle tale, and then report it abroad: I am not so easily duped. My daughter Emily, silly girl, was always prejudiced in favor of the chit; but she takes after her father. Poor man, he will not come to an ignominious end for setting the Thames

on fire." This ridiculous discourse was held with one of her female associates, whose ignoble ideas corresponded with her own. "Yet, methinks," said she, "I should like to obtain a peep at the doll they make such a parade with. I reckon myself a judge of beauty, and none can render it more justice," pursued the arrogant Mrs. Barlowe. "Ah, but," replied Mrs. Godolphin, with a satirical smile, "if report tells truth, you would have no room to criticise there, for she is the perfect paragon of feminine charms." "Then she is more than ever woman was before her," resumed Mrs. Barlowe, trying to screw up her mouth, that was naturally of a prodigious length, and grinning with malicious spite. The passion of curiosity, however, dwells more or less in women: she grew more and more inquisitive to behold our heroine; but it was not a laudable inquisitiveness. Had she been in the habit of going into public, she might have seen her frequently: but Mr. Barlowe, being of a very different turn from herself, he was fond of a retired life, and she was constrained to affect an accordance with his principles, though she inwardly despised them. When Lady Ellincourt died, and the Duchess was at the Abbey, she thought she had a fair opportunity of having a sight of her. Accordingly she came, and was introduced to Fanny. She addressed her with an air of complaisance, and after pretending to sympathise with her in the loss she had sustained, she said, "Your Grace was, if I recollect, the companion of my daughter at school." The Duchess answered in the affirmative, adding, "that she had been so happy to engage the early affections of her dear Emily, and that she now possest her warmest friendship." Mrs. Barlowe surveyed her from top to toe, and felt the bitterest envy rankling in her soul, as she could not help acknowledging that she was the

most beautiful of women; though she, in the same instant, was angry with herself for making the declaration. The Duchess was far from being prepossessed in her favour; there was nothing to attract in her deportment; but, as the mother of her beloved Emily, she wished to treat her with respect, and, if possible, to try to esteem her: the latter point it was not so easy to succeed in; the former could be no difficulty to the refined manners of the polished Duchess of Albemarle. To Mrs. Hamilton she was civil, but no more; they were both too handsome to share an interest in the heart of a woman resembling Mrs. Barlowe. She did not make a very long stay. She had accomplished her desire, and maternal tenderness was not strong enough to induce her to prolong her visit. So singularly depraved was this unhappy being, that, because her husband had extolled the charms of Lady Albemarle, and she knew sometimes called at Darby-House, she had not hesitated to suspect, and even accuse, him of harbouring an improper attachment for her. It is needless to state that he despised so gross an insinuation. To say that he loved his wife, would be to assert almost an impossibility, as her disposition was too unamiable to either love, or admit of being loved; but to say that he was a good husband is no more than strictly the truth; he indulged his lady in every thing that her caprice demanded as to dress, and keeping what company she pleased: the only restraint was her abstaining from public places. She had plenty of money, and no man was ever more constant. His character has been admired, respecting the lovely, once Fatherless Fanny. His conduct concerning her was noble; and now that her history was revealed, he participated in the universal joy that was manifested on the occasion. He was himself a father, therefore could conceive a father's feelings on

discovering a beloved child. But Mrs. Barlowe, though a mother, was unrecognizable to every soft affection; avarice, pride, and ambition were the ruling passions in her breast. After her interview with the Duchess, the latter retired to her apartment, and the rest of the melancholy inhabitants of Penbertram Abbey, having performed their evening's orisons, repaired to the night.

CHAPTER LI

The Funeral—Grandeur of Lord Ellesmere—and most curious Surprise.

Nothing of any importance occurred from this period till the day on which the funeral of the departed Lady Ellesmere was to be solemnized. On that day the colors of grief were wide displayed; they added to the sombre appearance of the Abbey, and on more forlorn prominent, every eye streamed with tears, every heart was the habitation of woe. The long avenues to the house were crowded by a concourse of attendants, who were to follow the weeping procession. The bell began its deep funeral knell. Twelve carriages were occupied with the relations and particular friends of the deceased. In the first were Lord Ellesmere, Mr. Hamilton, the Duke of Abermarle, and Mr. Barlowe. Lord Montchesney went alone: in no face were the tokens of sorrow expressed stronger than in his. She was the only friend to whom he could pour forth his complaints, and find a soothing balm; to her he lost his every

consolation. Fifty carriages belonging to the nobility and gentry followed the mourners. The servants of the lamented Lady Ellincourt, and the poor who had often experienced the effects of her bounty, formed a cavalcade on each side: crowds of attendants closed the melancholy train. The whole was conducted with elegant magnificence, but suitable decorum. It was a mile and a half to the Abbey Church, whither they slowly proceeded. She was interred in the family vault; and a splendid mausoleum was erected to her memory, on which was engraved the following nscription:

Here lieth the last mortal relics
of Louisa Frances, Lady Dowager Ellincourt,
who departed this life, in the 60th year of her age,
on Monday, September 9th, in the year of our Lord 1780.
She was adored by her numerous relations for the many eminent virtues by which her character was distinguished
and esteemed by a large circle of acquaintance.
To the poor an universal friend; the defender
of the fatherless, and comforter of the
widow. Peace eternal be to her
sacred Manes.

O! 'scap'd from life! O! safe on that calm shore;
Where sin, and pain, and passion, are no more!
What never wealth could buy, nor power decree,
Regard and Pity wait sincere on thee:
So soft remembrance drops a pious tear,
And holy friendship stands a mourner here.

The last mournful obsequies were performed by the Rev. Dr. Woodward, who gave out, that on the next Sabbath he should preach her funeral sermon, when her relatives would then be able to attend. The ceremony was truly grand and impressive; it seemed to inspire those assembled on the occasion with sentiments of awe and reverence they were unaccustomed to feel: being at an end, they returned in the same order they had set out. The ladies of the family awaited their arrival in an apartment where they had met together to condole; and the day was spent in tears and

lamentations. Mrs. Barlowe had been invited: she would gladly have declined the invitation; but as her husband was one of the mourners, and she stood in a degree of relationship to the Ellincourts, she could not very well refuse: there was no danger of her spirits being affected, for they were impregnable to the finer feelings.

Thus passed a week; and on Sunday the whole party repaired to church, to hear the funeral sermon of the beloved Lady Ellincourt. Dr. Woodward eulogized with much feeling, warmth, and pathos, on the merits of her who had so recently been committed to the cold silent tomb: he described her as the pattern of female excellence; and proposed her as an example for the fair sex. Not a dry eye was to be seen during this commentary on the virtues of a woman so much respected by those who knew her. Her sweet affable deportment had secured her the affections of every class; and, to prove whether a person is really worthy of estimation, is to inquire into the character they bear amongst the poor: if they speak with energy of their past amiable qualities, and drop a tear o'er their graves, we cannot doubt that they were deserving of the applause bestowed. But if the rich alone bewail their loss; if the countenances of the poor are unmoved, and their tongues are only exerted to declaim against the deceased, rest assured their goodness was only in the name; had it existed in the heart, gratitude would have drawn a sigh from these dependants on public bounty.

The service being over, the family returned to the Abbey, and the next morning the Duke and Duchess took leave of its beloved, at present, unhappy residents. They felt themselves necessitated to hasten back to Darby-House; but they promised in the course of a few weeks to pay them another visit. The Duchess, at parting,

embraced her mother and her dear Emily, and implored them to be as reconciled as they could to the Divine will. Lord Ellincourt seemed, if possible, to receive a larger share of affliction than even Mrs. Hamilton or Emily: he had loved his mother with an affection almost unequalled; and his passions were of that ardent nature, that they were not easily appeased: his native good sense, however, was its own operator, as is often the case. Arguments held with ourselves frequently prove more efficacious than those dictated by another. He evinced every public as well as private respect to the memory of his revered relative; he retained all the old domestics, who had served in the family for a number of years, except one;—that was the butler, Mr. Norris, who had been in that capacity upwards of forty years, and was now turned of four-score: by reason of his infirmities, he was incapable of holding it any longer, and he begged permission to retire. Lord Ellincourt told him, that he was sensible, at his age, it was very unfit he should have any office to think of; but that he had acted with so much prudence and propriety, ever since he had been in the service of Lady Ellincourt, that, if he liked his situation, he was welcome to remain in it, without undergoing any further fatigue. "No, my Lord," said the poor man, overjoyed at such a mark of favor, "you are the best of gentlemen, and I shall always in gratitude be bound to pray for you: but I cannot endure the idea of becoming a burthen to so good a master; if I am past doing service, I will not be an encumberance. I have, by my industry, amassed wages enough to support me decently for the little while I have to live; but I will endeavour to stay and make myself as useful as I can till your lordship has secured another servant." "Honest creature," said Lord

Ellincourt, "well may they say, 'honesty is its own reward,' since no jewel is equal to it." He did not apprise him of his intentions concerning him, as he feared his upright principles would defeat his purpose; but, consenting to his wishes, he dismissed him. As soon as he had quitted his presence, this worthy nobleman ordered his carriage, and, taking a ride round the country, fixed his eye upon a cottage, pleasantly situated: it was to let. He alighted, and surveyed it; it consisted of two apartments on the ground-floor, a comfortable bed-room up stairs, a good kitchen, a pantry, a cow-house, and a large garden, well stocked with vegetables. He instantly hired it on reasonable terms, and returned home, his heart considerably lightened of its weight of sorrow, by reflecting that he had contributed to the welfare of a fellow-creature. He then wrote to London to his banker, ordering him to make over the sum of fifty pounds per annum to the said Thomas Norris. Having so acted, he acquainted this valuable servant with what he had done for him. "You tell me, my friend," said he, "that you have saved money: I am glad to hear it: but, although you have no wife surviving, you may have some dear relative, that you could wish to be kind to, or to leave a trifle of money at your decease. If so, preserve the fruits of your virtuous industry. The pittance I have mentioned will enable you to live; you shall be rent free, and you will find plenty of pigs, poultry, and kine on the grounds of the cottage I design for you."

To describe the surprise, the grateful joy, of he faithful Norris, as he listened to this detail, would be beyond the power of mortals; it produced such an effect, that he fell prostrate at the feet of his master, and sobbed, unable to utter a word. Lord Ellincourt raised him from the

ground. "O, my master," he cried, "Oh, my master!" "Why are you thus affected," said his Lordship; "have I done any thing more than your long-continued services and strict fidelity gave you a title to expect? It is meet that years should be rewarded for the labours of youth; you deserve to enjoy the comforts of life in your latter days, and you shall enjoy them." So saying, he warmly shook him by the hand, wishing he might be spared for some years, to inhabit his rural abode. "You are indeed a man," replied Mr. Norris; "true, is the learned Mr. Pope's observation, 'that worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow.' You have proved your intrinsic worth, by your benevolence to an aged man, and God Almighty will, I hope, bless your Lordship."

Lord Ellincourt quitted him, overwhelmed with his prayers and thanks. Would you be loved like him, study to behave like him; not that study will form a heart; for if God has not been pleased to give one, no mortal endeavours will ever acquire it. The heart is the seat of either virtue or vice. Knowledge lies in the brain; but goodness, or its reverse, is in the breast of man. The most sensible people are often the most wicked; for this reason, if they are disposed to evil, being endued with a fine understanding, they have double opportunities to do mischief. An ignorant creature has not the power of concerting schemes for the accomplishment of desperate undertakings. But one possest of wisdom, if he has devoted it to bad purposes, is crafty, full of contrivance, and ready to aid in any plot for the completion of his vile machinations. A very sensible person, of either sex, is generally extremely amiable, or famed for avowed dishonour: seldom do we observe them between the two extremes. Those who move in a middling direction, neither rushing into guilt and idle dissipation, or living in

the practice of every virtue, are gifted, it is said, with a moderate capacity, and not without honorable principles. But it must be borne in memory, that, however some may strive to exalt such characters, the half-hearted in virtue's cause are more to be dreaded than those who plunge deepest into every sink of vice and dissipation. Their half-formed and palliating principles continually lay them open to temptation; making them more ready to listen to the suggestions of their passions, than the voice of reason. He who is endowed with strong intellect, but perverts the gift of the Creator to vile purposes, becomes known to the world as a vicious character, and may be avoided. The half-virtuous—he who regulates his vices by cold calculation, is as the snake in the grass, and stings when all seems secure. The moderately virtuous is in society what the lukewarm is in religion: where there are great parts, there is a greater elevation of ideas; and they must be either displayed in a good or a bad cause.

The next action of Lord Ellincourt was to provide for the poor parishioners, whom his mother had rendered assistance to in their distress. For several of them, he built some alms-houses, putting each family into possession of one; thus making them perfectly comfortable for the remainder of their existences. In short, he was the universal reliever of indigence; and the condescension with which he inquired into cases of calamity, enhanced the value of his gifts tenfold.

About this time, a friend arrived from Paris, whom he had not seen for ten years, having been hurried to that country on business of the highest importance. This was Sir Henry Ambersley. He had negotiated the affair he went upon, and now returned, elated with his success. He hastened immediately to the Abbey, as he

was impatient to see Lord Ellincourt, for whom he had a warm regard. His joy was, however, a little damped, on learning the loss he had sustained: he condoled with him in language most affecting. But, on being acquainted with his nuptials, and introduced to the lovely fair whom he had chosen for his bride, he congratulated him on the blissful event, and wished him many years of uninterrupted happiness. Sir Henry Ambersley was, I must inform my readers, not the only person who had come from abroad, and was desirous of an interview with Lord Ellincourt: he was accompanied by a lady, who, though past the prime of life, was still handsome. She had long been tenderly attached to Lord Ellincourt, and he had once loved her with an affection the most fervent. Once, did I say? it had never been eradicated from his breast; its strength had rather been confirmed by their separation.

Methinks I see the reader start, look puzzled, and, perhaps, heave a sigh for poor Emily. Go on, my friends; be assured poor Emily is in no danger of being made jealous by the allurements of this innocent female, since she was neither more nor less than the identical little Fanny whom his Lordship lost so many years before. She actually came from France under the escort of Sir Henry. By what means she was carried out of her native land is bye-and-bye to be told. Sir Henry had intended to have a bit of fun about the dog before he introduced her to his Lordship; but, finding this to be an unseasonable period for jokes, he, after the most important conversation was over, asked him "if he had forgot the little animal they had once had such sport about?" "No," answered he; "I have not forgotten her, I have often wished I could find her; but I despair of it after such a length of time." "Do not despair," said Sir Henry, "for I

have found her, and can restore her to you." "Are you hoaxing me?" returned Lord Ellincourt, viewing him attentively. "No, indeed," replied Sir Henry, "this is not a time for hoaxing. I have really got the dog," and he rang the bell for a servant. On one appearing, he ordered him to go to his carriage, and bring the spaniel that was in it. He obeyed. As soon as he entered with her, the animal, who knew her master, sprang out of his arms, and fell down at the feet of Lord Ellincourt in a fit. She was instantly picked up, and presently restored to animation; on which she was caressed by her master in the kindest manner. She wagged her tail, and began to exhibit every sign of exultation. There is no quadruped so sagacious as dogs: they never forget good treatment, and as seldom remember bad. They are noble and loving in their dispositions, fraught with the most acute sensibility, and ready on every occasion to testify their zeal in our cause. Lord Ellincourt became eager to know the story of the little Fanny, and how she had been conveyed abroad. "Do you remember," said Sir Henry, "Jack Robertson, the servant whom you dismissed a few months before I embarked for France, on suspicion of purloining plate; but the fact was never clearly proved?" "Very well," answered Lord Ellincourt. "He then stole your dog," resumed Sir Henry. "I cannot say whether he was a plunderer in any thing else or not; but, knowing your attachment to it, a brutal desire of revenge for the impeachment of his character, as he termed it, prompted him to deprive a defenceless animal of her protector. He took her to France, and had been there four months when I reached that place. I was no stranger either to the persons of the servant or the dog, therefore immediately identified them both. He strove to evade my questions, but could not dispute my authority as to Fan. When

I called her by her name, she shewed by her various gesticulations that she understood me. In short, I insisted upon his giving her up, or I would expose him to the vindictive sentence of the law for the robbery he had been accused of when in England. He did not offer to justify his past conduct, but quietly resigned the dog. I would willingly have returned to England without delay, but it was impossible; the nature of my affairs required that I should continue abroad. I have taken great care of Fanny however, and am glad to find she knows your Lordship." Lord Ellincourt thanked him for his considerate attention, and again renewed his endearments to his favourite, whose eyes sparkled with delight. The conversation changed. Sir Henry asked "if Colonel Ross was in London?" "He is in heaven, or the other place," answered Lord Ellincourt. Sir Henry started. "It is very true," he resumed, and instantly related the manner of his death, with some coincident circumstances attending it. Sir Henry was much shocked on hearing so sad an account. "I always thought him a wicked fellow," said he; "but I hoped that by this time he was reformed." "I believe," replied Lord Ellincourt, "that his repentance was at last sincere; but he seemed to have devoted himself to destruction, and his behaviour to my amiable cousin was barbarous to a degree." Surprised as was Sir Henry at this relation, there was an event that remained to be unfolded to him of a far more astonishing nature: this was the history of the lovely Fanny, who had been the occasion of so much merriment. Lord Ellincourt revealed the story of her birth, and her union with the Duke of Albemarle, concluding by affirming her to be the most deserving of women. "I am amazed, indeed," returned Sir Henry; "yet I must confess there was an air of dignity in her, even then, that denoted something more than ordi-

nary. Is she as beautiful as when a child?" "Fifty times more so, if that can be imagined," cried Lord Ellincourt, with energy. "She is divinely handsome; but it is her mind, Ambersley, that has raised her to her present station. My friend, the Duke of Albemarle, would never have married a woman, let her beauty have been ever so transcendant, had she not been endowed with those rarer accomplishments that the mind produce. Personal charms soon fade, but internal perfections are more durable." "In troth they are," replied Sir Henry; "but justly do you call them rare, for I have proved them such. I was nearly being caught myself whilst in Paris; but, thank Heaven, I escaped the noose." "Are you then heart-whole as well as hand-whole?" said Lord Ellincourt. "I am," Sir Henry resumed. "In my travels I met with a young French woman, whose bright attractions quickly won upon my soul. I paid my addresses to her: she returned my declarations of love, and we were on the eve of marriage. A few days, however, before the wedding was appointed to take place, I had the good fortune to hear that she was a noted woman of intrigue, and wanted to get married to the first man of rank who would make her the offer. I should, therefore, have been the tool of her pleasures, instead of the husband of her choice. I call it good fortune, because it preserved me from ruin. I instantly waited upon the lady, and told her I thought she had great merit for her contrivances, but that for once the biter had been bit. I had the honor to be her most humble servant. She answered me only with a contemptuous sneer, and I never saw her after. I was very mortified, as you may suppose, at being so nearly made the dupe of an artful and designing female; but I can assure you that was the only sensation of concern I expe rienced. I was not sufficiently in love, to break

my heart about the perfidy of my mistress." "I cannot think," cried Lord Ellincourt, "what could prepossess you for a moment to have an idea of marrying a foreigner, such plenty of English beauties as you may daily see." "Ah, but," said Sir Henry, "I knew I was doomed to dwell on foreign shores for such a lapse of time, that I almost feared I might die a bachelor; and the bare thought of that is insupportable. Whenever I hear of a man dying single, unless he is quite a youth, it occurs to me that there was something so disagreeable in him, no woman would venture to accept him; and now how shockingly one's vanity would be humbled to have that said of one after one's decease." Lord Ellincourt could hardly forbear smiling at this discussion; he, however, congratulated his friend on his return to England, and wished he might soon find a lady with whom there might be a prospect of happiness in the matrimonial state. With this concluding observation they for the present took leave.

CHAPTER LII.

Conclusion.

When the Duchess returned to Darby-House, Sir Everard and Lady Mornington were taking a walk in the beautiful gardens that surrounded this elegant mansion. Thither the Duke and his bride hastened to meet them. Their first salutations were mournful. Amelia's countenance wore not the playful smile it was wont to do. Her friend was unhappy, and she participated in her emotions of grief. By degrees, however, affliction wears away; the sharpest sorrows grow less and less

acute, particularly those inflicted by death. God has ordained that we should die; and if he pleases to remove those we love best on earth, we hope it is to inherit a crown of unfading righteousness, and that should resign us to their departure. There are a variety of evils which our own misconduct may have occasioned us to smart under. It is not so easy to derive consolation under them, because they have been our own seeking. But death, even supposing it an evil we are not accountable for, to presume, however, to give it that appellation, is to call the goodness of the Eternal in question. On the contrary, it is the most signal of the divine blessings. When the heart is opprest by a series of calamity; when sickness, indigence, and other accumulating trials, nearly weigh us to the ground, if we address the omniscient Source of mightiness, if we consider him as a being ready to redress our woes, and reflect that there is a heaven above to which we shortly shall repair, our troubles will quickly be alleviated. The only real comfort we can derive, is, that a period must come, when we shall be delivered from misfortune, and received into the presence of our Lord. Our souls must surely thrill with transport at an idea so replete with ecstacy. The more miserable our situation, the brighter our contemplation on the Deity, and his unspeakable glories; and the stronger our feelings of joy on anticipating a release from suffering.

To return to our subject.—The amiable Lady Mornington and her husband, having staid a couple of months at Darby-House, took leave of their beloved friends, and repaired to London; though not without evident regret, as they were made entire converts to their opinions, and fonder of the country than ever they had been of the town. The Duchess was now in a situation which promised the house of Albemarle an heir, and all necessary preparations were making for the birth of

the expected child, and all things wore the face of joy. Grief for Lady Ellincourt gradually absorbed into a reverential respect for her memory.

Pemberton Abbey became once more the seat of festive mirth; tears were banished, and smiles usurped their place. Some months having elapsed, Lady Ellincourt presented his Lordship an heir. This event increased the happiness of all parties, as it had long been fervently wished for. The child was christened Edmund, after his father. The lovely Fanny presented the Duke about the same time with a daughter, the image of herself in beauty;—that was called Emily, as it was her mother's name, and her dear Lady Ellincourt's. They received the congratulatory compliments of all the nobility on these truly blissful occasions.

Lady Palmer, whose calamity must have drawn forth the tear of universal compassion, became the steady friend of Mrs. Hamilton, and of the Ellincourts. Time obliterated her sorrow for the loss of her abandoned husband, though she never entirely forgot the sincerity with which she once had loved him. Her tranquillity was in a measure restored, and her virtuous and praiseworthy character secured the esteem of all who knew her. Lord Mountmorris embraced the advice of his departed friend, and procured an immediate divorce from his lady; after which he retired into Wales, and resided at a beautiful seat he held in that principality. Here he strove to forget the charms of her who had seduced him to his ruin: but it was long 'ere he could tear her image from his remembrance. Her bewitching smile, her artful blandishments, when striving to captivate his heart, all returned with resistless force upon his fond imagination. He endeavoured, notwithstanding, to efface these impressions so destructive to his peace. He dwelt upon her cruel indifference after they were married, and the scandalous conduct she at last displayed. On which, he taught himself by

slow degrees to despise her; not to hate, for his generous nature was incapable of that passion; but he abhorred her treachery, and detested her principles. He was never perfectly happy; but the rural joys of a country life contributed far more to render him so, than the empty noise of the tumultuous town. There every thing conspired to remind him of the perfidious Charlotte. In the former, his passions were calmed, and his reason had more scope for exertion.

We shall now say a few words concerning the wicked authors of his wretchedness, and the fate that attended their proceedings. On arriving in Holland, this guilty pair ascribed no bounds to their extravagant licentiousness; their flame was at its height, and they failed not to indulge it. They loved, or thought they loved, and they imagined themselves in the possession of happiness: but soon they grew tired of each other. Sir Richard was too versatile to be long attached to the same woman. There is as much variety in beauty, as in the perfections of the mind: he was sometimes charmed with the lustre of a black eye; at others, with the delicate softness of a blue one. He began to manifest signs of indifference, that her proud spirit could not brook. She accused him of treating her with negligence. "Had you the vanity to suppose, madam," said he, "that your captive once, would be your captive always? No, Lady Mountmorris, you may think yourself lucky to have held me in chains till now; a month is a much longer period than fashionables of our stamp generally live together."

"I have captives enough in my train, I assure you," scornfully uttered Lady M. "I do not doubt it, madam," answered Sir Richard, with a look of *sang froid*. "I well know, I was not the first; your character——" "Is better than your's, Sir Richard; so prithee no more of that," interrupted the lady. "Was it for such an ungrateful

monster, I deserted my husband and my home?" "Do not talk of ingratitude, madam," vehemently replied Sir Richard; "your own breast is its abode, or you would never have been what you are." "I understand you, sir," pursued Lady M.; "you wish already to get rid of me; no matter, I have as little regard for you, as you can have for me. I had a very handsome offer yesterday, from the Duke of Carlisle, and I shall embrace it instantly. Good morning, sir," and courtesying gracefully, she tripped out of the room. Sir Richard bowed his head, and thus our lovers parted.

Her Ladyship ordered her carriage, and drove to the house of the Duke of Carlisle. He was an English noble, but in Holland on business. By him she was received with raptures. Angel, goddess, common-place words, were by turns bestowed upon her. He had a wife and family in England, and bore the name of living very happy with them; but this female-fiend had seduced his senses, and driven them away like a whirlwind She was soon, however, off his hands. Her next gallant was Colonel Candeker, of the Light Corps. From the time of her elopement from Lord Mountmorris, she had led for a twelvemonth a life of depravity and vice; at the end of that period, torn by contending passions, the mind, as if wearied of the storm, often relapsed into a calm. In those moments, the gentle disposition of Mountmorris would be placed in competition with those of her present lovers: if they were for a time profuse, parsimony succeeded; but his generosity was always the same; his love, if not ardent, was steady: their's, as the meteor's light, illumined but for a moment, deceived, and left the wretch, who expected felicity in their smiles, a poor forlorn outcast. Did she desire to mix in that society, which from her earliest infancy she had been used to frequent? the vice which she had

plunged into, barred the doors of virtue, discretion, and good fame, against her. Was it so in those days, when Mountmorris by her side was as a passport to the most elevated families? Oh! no; distracting thought—I have abused his confidence.—I have wounded his peace.—I have lost my own reputation, and involved him in my shame. Oh, God!—Hush! There is no Superior Being—Sir Richard told me so—curses light upon thy head, Palmer—Oh, thou hast robbed me of hope—thou hast made me a wretch indeed. The last resource of the troubled spirit is religion—thou hast made me doubt its reality. If thy arguments are fallacious, I am undone; soul and body are doomed to eternal torment.—Oh, how I dread to prove—is there a hell! A cold shivering seized her; the thought was fraught with horror, and she sunk lifeless on the floor. The noise of her fall called in the owners of the house in which she had apartments: for a time, they thought the vital spark had fled; and after applying the usual remedies, however, animation returned. Her eyes, wildly gazing, seemed to inquire if she had thrown off the mortal coil. "Where am I?" said she, in a fearful faultering voice. "Safe," answered her host. "Safe," cried she, in ecstacy, and bounding from the sofa, exclaimed, "Then I am in hell—Oh no! Thank you, my friends, I have been ill, I am better now—send my woman to me." "Your woman!" said the hostess; "she has set off in the Diligence this morning, and I thought your ladyship knew of it; I helped her myself to pack up the boxes." "The boxes," said Lady Mountmorris, "the boxes! now I am miserable indeed. Leave me," continued she; "I have something of importance to do before I follow her." They retired. And now the phrenzy of passion seized her: the lovely countenance, which once pleased and astonished, was now filled

with horror; and that eye, which was once the seat of a thousand loves, became the habitation of despair. She was now robbed of every resource: her money, her valuables, her trinkets gone; stolen by her whom she thought loved her, whom she expected was bound by every tie of gratitude and honour. "Honour! ha! honour! when I had none myself, how could I expect it in her? Mountmorris, no—Palmer, to you—we shall meet again," said she, while all the haggard furies appeared disputing for the ascendancy in her once-fair face; then seizing a phial, she emptied it to the very dregs:—'twas poison. "Ha, ha!" with a hectic laugh, "tis done." And now the subtle poison works, and nature, unable to resist, sinks beneath its powers. Poor lost child of passion! thou soughtest pleasure, and in its eager pursuit passed the object. She is gone, with all her catalogue of crimes unrepented of, to face the awful presence of her Maker. Such was the end of the young, handsome, gay, attracting Lady Mountmorris. That of Sir Richard was scarcely less shocking. Whilst his vile paramour was revelling in guilty pleasures, he was forming additional plans for the destruction of more victims. He had made a resolution never to return to his wife; and for several months he continued in the paths of libertinism. At last, Almighty vengeance overtook him. He had concerted a project for the seduction of a lovely girl, and had nearly accomplished it, by professing to address her with views of marriage: his real designs were discovered by the brother of the maiden: he challenged him, and they fought. Sir Richard was mortally wounded; but no fault could be imputed to his antagonist. We shall, however, leave this subject, and proceed to the other characters, as it is necessary we should be brief.

Lady Ballafyn did not long survive the loss of her Lord: his injurious treatment, and disgrace-

ful exit, nearly broke her heart;—she expired in the arms of the best of mothers. The Marquis and Marchioness of Petersfield soon followed: they were rather advanced in years, and the misfortunes of their beloved Maria overpowered them. Their remaining daughter, Lady Isabella, married the Earl of Somerset. She has been represented as proud and haughty; but the afflictions her family had met with, subdued her spirit. She made an excellent wife, and her manners became softened and refined.

Mrs. Barlowe, the imperious Mrs. Barlowe, after tyrannizing over all with whom she had any power for a number of years, died suddenly in an apoplectic fit. The worthy Mr. Barlowe lived to a great age, and continued to be universally esteemed. Their eldest daughter, Mrs. Cornel, lived and died abroad. She was a woman without any natural feelings; therefore, had not the smallest inclination to re-visit her native clime, or to behold the relations and friends of her early infancy. She had one child, which was still-born. She was as happy with her husband, as such women generally are: he grudged her nothing, and as there was no want of money, there was no discord with them. Her sister, the amiable Emily, fully secured the affections of Lord Ellincourt, by her tender obliging assiduities, and the uniform tenor of her conduct. They had several children, and they educated them in the best manner. Our heroine, the charming Fanny, was likewise blessed by Providence with numerous pledges of their mutual love. She was an affectionate mother, and her offspring inherited the virtues of their excellent parents. Would wives be happy, like Fanny, let them study to behave as she did. Every man is not a similar character to the Duke of Albemarle; but almost every man might be made to resemble him in a degree, would women conform to their tempers, and respect, as it deserves, the

matrimonial vow. Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton lived many years to enjoy felicity, and thought themselves amply recompensed for former trials, in present happiness, and the hope of future bliss. Sir Henry Ambersley shortly married Lady Margaret Noland, a female of distinguished beauty and sense, with whom he was very happy. Lady Mornington in about a year and a half after their nuptials, presented Sir Everard with twins, a lovely boy and a girl. This couple grew more and more domesticated; their time was divided between town and country, and their dispositions were such that they derived enjoyment from both. Amelia still preserved the sprightliness that was natural to her character, but was entirely divested of its volubility. Sir Everard totally forsook the pleasures of shooting and the chase, and commenced a rational life. As to the arrogant Miss Bridewell, she continued to reign at Myrtle Grove, and was wisely denominated the female hector of the place. The pious Dr. Woodward died in a few years, and was interred with all possible respect. The honest Mr. Norris retired to the cottage appropriated for his use, blessing the name of the benevolent donor. He lived in it twenty years, thus reaching the astonishing period of a hundred. Here concludes the story of the lovely Fanny.

THE END.

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